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NEW STATESMAN

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Mr Lynch's Apple Cart

It is easy to understand the recent burst of irritation from the bluff, no-nonsense Roy Mason. Having been able to report, *mirabile dictu*, a year of reduced violence in the Six Counties, with Unionist ultras outfaced and Republican gunmen diminished, he is now taken in the rear by Mr Jack Lynch. Not only does Mr Lynch repeat the hallowed Fianna Fail commitment to final Irish unification, but he also flirts with the idea of an amnesty for the detained members of the Provisional IRA. Enough to try the patience of a saint – and Mr Mason is no saint.

According to taste, this can be taken as an indication of the incorrigibility of Irish politics, or the proof that British policy there will always fall between two stools. The real and vital difference between any British and any Irish government is, as the NEW STATESMAN has pointed out before, that while a British government can withdraw from N. Ireland an Irish one cannot. Only last week, our correspondent Mary Holland foreshadowed the very course that Mr Lynch would take, and the reasons he would give for it. All reports of the death of Irish nationalism have been greatly exaggerated – the British have nobody to blame but themselves if they choose to listen to soothing voices which insist otherwise.

Plainly, Mr Lynch was out to make trouble. The very reference to an amnesty for terrorists puts his remarks on a different plane from the usual pieties about a United Ireland. As the level of violence falls below the headlines, British people may not have noticed the increasing intimacy between the Labour Government and the Unionists; Irish voters can be forgiven if they do not make the same mistake. But Mr Lynch – a man whose reputation as an eccentric and a Tammany politician will not easily be overcome by his new 'elder statesman' role – has succeeded in political overkill. Both the Official and the 'Democratic' (or Paisleyite) Unionists were looking for an excuse to pull out of the power-sharing talks with Mr Mason and his team. This excuse has now come to them on a plate. Only limited devolution is on offer – with the carrot of increased representation at Westminster held in reserve for the deliberations of the already-sitting Speaker's Conference. Such an eventual constitutional change would, of course, delight the Unionists and thus ally the Labour Party with what is arguably the most reactionary political bloc in Britain.

This version of the Callaghan style was all very well when Dublin affairs were dominated by Mr Cosgrave and Dr O'Brien. The objections of the Ulster Catholic minority could be safely ignored – if only because their two MPs in the House of Commons had no recourse but to vote with Labour anyway. This comfortable axis has now been kicked badly out of shape. There have always been two radically different justifications for a British stewardship of Northern Ireland. The first was the traditional Unionist one of the integrity of the UK, with all its grisly paraphernalia of 'no surrender', sectarianism and the preservation of outmoded interests. The second, which was embodied for a time by Stanley Orme, was that British Labour should shoulder the responsibility for saving the province from its ancestral and atavistic factions: should in effect insure Ulstermen against a kind of fascism. Both these policies left public opinion more or less cold, with many feeling that Irishmen should be left to slaughter each other.

Repeatedly, this paper has argued for a policy that would leave Ireland to the Irish under the best obtainable conditions. What Mr Lynch has underlined, in a ham-fisted way, is the folly of any strategy which ignores this option. British policy is damned when it doesn't work and also, on the basis of 'do we need you any more?', damned when it does. There is nobody who believes that the British army will stay there for ever, but there are many people who frame their short and medium-run policies as if this were the case. No real benefit has accrued from this pretence in the near-decade of troops and direct rule. The Irish, north and south, are there for ever. There will be more and sharper reminders to the Government that its present course cannot result in success if it continues with the tactics of horse-trading and blank cheques.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

The New Mrs Thatcher

Speaking at a meat-processing factory in Dyce during her recent, and apparently not very successful, Scottish tour, Mrs Thatcher told the management: 'My family love sausages. That sort of food is ideal for a person who lives the kind of life I do.' This is the new Mrs Thatcher – soft, sexy, sausage-scoffing, sensitive to the hopes and aspirations of those she meets. In another context, for instance in her own constituency, she might have kept the sausages under her hat. But up in Aberdeenshire (or down in Aberdeenshire, if you insist) she was at liberty to reveal all. I imagine that Gordon Reece, the EMI executive who has been hired as her image-builder, and who was with her on the trip, would have been proud of the effort. 'Listen, darling,' I can hear him saying it, 'you've got to *think sausage*. You've got to *ooze* with sausage-appeal. You've got to get inside the skin of it – you've got to be every inch a sausage.' And Mrs Thatcher obliged.

She's a game old thing, is she not? Always trotting around, meeting people, shaking hands, and leaning forward to ask her questions, with an air of enormous concern – and then, on to the next appointment, with just enough time for another briefing from Reece: 'Darling, you were *super* as a sausage. Now – this afternoon it's a gherkin bottling plant. You've got to *be* a gherkin . . .' But of course, whatever the success of Reece, however gently she manages to modulate her accents, however convincingly she gets across the notion that she never passes over the opportunity to tuck into a pickled onion, she must know that this kind of image-building is fundamentally beside the point. Doctor Johnson put it well. You may talk all the nonsense you wish, he said, but the important thing is not to *think* nonsense. What then are the realistic considerations behind Mrs Thatcher's recent manoeuvres?

Many Tories undoubtedly feel that the game is up. There was a tide in the affairs of Maggie. It was not taken at the flood. Consequently it will not lead on to fortune. Callaghan's luck has held, and every day brings new triumphs. Why – he even succeeds in India in a way which invites favourable comparison with Carter. The firemen's strike draws to a painful close. The Labour Party is in a good mood. Michael Foot, deputising at PM's questions last Tuesday, makes merry sport of the Opposition front bench, teasing Sir Keith Joseph into purple embarrassment. The Tories are seen as uncertain and divided on many of the crucial issues of the day.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, for instance, looking like an illustration from *Jennings Goes to School*, takes advantage of the absence of Jim Prior to snap out against the unions: 'Why should it be doubted that key figures in Britain's trade union hierarchy wish to see us move along a Soviet road?' There must be fundamental changes in their aims and roles. For instance, he attacks the role they have played in the formulation of government policy. And, for good measure, he suggests that they be forced to hold regular elections for top jobs – no more elections for life.

As so often, there is a superficial similarity between the Tory and the left-wing view on these matters. Regular elections for key union posts are a democratic and socialist demand. The difference is – the left-winger wants such changes to be implemented by his own union, not forced on them by a Tory Government. Sir Geoffrey knows this perfectly well. He is out to raise hackles, and in particular to raise the hackles of his mate, the traitor Jim Prior.

Poor old Prior. Every time he seems as if he's getting somewhere in taming his party, somebody goes berserk. Last autumn he seemed for a while to have won against Sir Keith. It seemed as if the melancholy realism of his attitude on the closed shop had won the day. Who would have suspected that the next man to explode would be the architect of the Industrial Relations Act? And who has permitted him to explode? The Tory suspicion was that Mrs Thatcher must have decided to push harder on the unions. But her speech on Monday has been variously interpreted, and in essence it seems to me that she wishes to maintain a certain ambiguity of stance, while she sees which way the tide is going. On the one hand, let Sir Geoffrey sound off agressively. On the other, let Jim do his friendly act. On the one hand, Howe's call for an end to the 'political' role of the unions. On the other, Prior's 'we have to live with trade union leaders who have political power.' Come the day, come the great campaign, either Prior or Howe could be gagged and tied to the chair.

This is what has happened to the Tories since the Government first began to show signs that it might pull through. The simplicity of approach has been lost. It was thought to be quite a good and simple idea to come out flatly against devolution. There was a bit of a blood-letting, but nothing serious. Now, however, we have Mrs Thatcher's 'I am a passionate devolutionist at heart' – that is to say, I would like devolution just as long as nothing is actually meant by the term, a sort of devolution of the mind. This, by analogy with the slogan 'Power to the People', which on Tory lips means so very little.

Your actual committed, Ludwig-von-Mises-reading, power-to-the-market-believing right-winger has never really trusted Mrs Thatcher's ideological purity or commitment, and will find much cause for justification as the months roll on. If Mrs Thatcher could excite the electorate by taking a hard line, no doubt she would. But she does not want simply to frighten the voters off, or drive the milder form of Tory, panic-stricken, into the arms of Callaghan. The new Mrs Thatcher, therefore, resembles the old one in all but conviction. As the polls give her less cause for comfort, as the pound strengthens, as the price of groceries is actually forced down in the big supermarkets that conviction is bound to be discouraged.

And yet, and yet, I find it difficult to trust even the most careful of the commentators. For there is a certain vacuity in the argument. The virtues of Callaghan, the virtues of Thatcher, the basis on which the calculations are made – it's all so feeble. Take Callaghan: his colleagues are enormously grateful for his present success – but how deep does their enormous gratitude go? Suppose he just manages to lose the next election, will people be able to remember what it was they thought so good about him? People find it very difficult already to remember what it was they thought so good about Harold Wilson.

It is the same with Mrs Thatcher and the Tories. When things went well, people who had opposed her in the leadership election were quite often prepared to be generous. You know, they would say, she's got something. You have to hand it to her. And then, no sooner had they handed it to her, than they began to want it back. Might it not have been a little rash to trust a woman, they visibly think. If she were to *win*, of course, they would very soon be unable to remember any doubts they had.

It is for this reason that one begins what may be an election year without a great deal of enthusiasm. The actual fight, of course, will be enjoyable enough, but the build-up is intolerable. Nobody says what he believes, only what he believes may be believed. It is the season of bogus plain-speaking and the tyranny of the pollsters, the tired smile and the squeezed hand. People start affecting extraordinary interests. They want to know, for the first time in their lives, exactly how haggises are made. They suddenly discover a quality in sausages which makes them particularly appropriate for the sort of life they lead – a life of official receptions, banquets and dinners. Suddenly sausages are just the thing.

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Corinna Adam

Eight Weeks' Hard

'There's no such thing as a nice strike,' a Fire Brigades Union official told the *Observer*, two long months ago when it all began. If he sounded defensive, that was only understandable. At the time, everyone was convinced that the strike would be a vicious one, attended by disasters on an unimaginable scale: it also seemed likely that it would be short, because the tragedies that were predicted would shame the firemen into going back. The strikers could be pardoned for fearing some sort of lynch law was in the making, if they read any paper other than the *Mirror*, which maintained a tone of kindly, almost jovial impartiality throughout. Even the *Morning Star*'s defence of the firemen was so excitable, so sure that they were in danger of being victimised, that it was almost as alarming as the attacks themselves.

But not quite. Not even in the darkest days of the 1974 miners' strike was the press so consistently hostile, not to say alarmist, as at the beginning of this one. The *Sun* began as it intended to go on. 'Will you really let the children and the old folk burn? This is the soul-searching question every one of Britain's firemen must ask himself today . . .' (A lot of firemen did ask themselves just that question, and some of the more spirited replied Yes, and the Queen in Windsor Castle, come to that. The *Mail* and the *Express* hastened to reassure their readers that the Queen had a private fire-fighting force, anyway.) The *Express*, predictably, published an all-purpose photograph of a small child, and explained that 'The face of a little boy snatched from tragedy confronts Britain's firemen as they down tools today'; the *Mail* went one better and had photographs and tearful stories of *two* children.

This kind of special pleading is not for the qualities, but they too were all much of a mind: the *Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *Times* and *Telegraph* carried more or less interchangeable comments to the effect that the firemen must not be allowed to break the 10 per cent rule. *The Times* noted that 'it is the authority of the Government which is at stake'. The *Guardian* admonished: 'If the firemen believe that the responsibility for what they are doing – or, more to the point, for what in full knowledge of the consequences they are declining to do – can be hung around the neck of Mr Rees and his colleagues in government, they are dangerously deluded.'

But although the general feeling was that the firemen shouldn't have gone on strike – and the *Telegraph* opined as it always does, that there should be reserved occupations where striking is forbidden by law – most of the moralising was done in the correspondence columns. The Archbishop of Westminster, Basil Hume, felt it incumbent upon him to hold forth in *The Times* on the 'acute moral problems for the Christian conscience' posed by a strike which put lives at risk. The *Morning Star* couldn't resist the obvious rhetorical question: 'If Jesus, who suffered body and soul the anguish of the poor, or Peter, who hated injustice with the fiery passion of a humble fisherman, were here today, we wonder where they would be. In the archbishop's office writing letters to *The Times*, or on the picket lines demanding justice for the firemen?'

The *Mail* managed to keep up a head of steam when everyone else showed signs of simmering down, after the first emotional days. More than any other paper, it adopted the cause of the soldiers. 'Exhausted soldiers, black with smoke and drenched to the skin, are being compelled to live in scandalous conditions as they stand in for Britain's striking firemen' and 'Britain's young soldiers in their slum fire stations are anything up to £10 a week worse off than the striking firemen'. The soldiers, naturally, became everybody's heroes: the hoax callers were agreed to be the villains of the piece: as the strike went into its third and fourth weeks, the firemen themselves were no longer in the centre of the

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stage. By the middle of December, the strikers were being proclaimed to be despondent, and their tempers were shortening. The *Mirror*, which had kept the strike largely off the front page, reported in detail when fighting broke out on a picket line as a part-time fireman tried to drive through it.

But although that kind of incident is popularly supposed to turn the public against strikers, what became clear as the strike continued was the abiding sympathy for the firemen, despite the attitude of the press. The *Telegraph*, publishing the result of its latest Gallup poll on 10 December, announced that support for the firemen was 'declining'. This was strictly speaking true, as well as being what the *Telegraph* wanted to hear: but more surprising was the fact that even so, 62 per cent still thought that they should be treated as a special case.

By the following week it was clear that the general mood of the press had changed from the original one of fear mixed with rage, however artificially stimulated. The report that the Department of Health and Social Security was putting difficulties in the way of strikers' families drawing benefit – a story which in other cases would probably be dismissed as sheer conspiracy theory – was sympathetically, even respectfully treated all round. There seemed at this stage to be mutual agreement that the strikers had lost, so that everyone could afford to be magnanimous: and this was underlined on 21 December, when the TUC refused yet again to back the strike. This was regarded as so much a foregone conclusion that it didn't even rate editorials – except, that is, in the *Morning Star*, which remarked encouragingly that there had been 'unprecedented solidarity scenes around Congress House' and did its best to turn the defeat into a victory, reflecting 'the deep support there is in the movement for the firemen's case'.

The approach of Christmas brought predictable applause for the army: the *Sun* reported that 'Everyone wanted to play Santa yesterday to Britain's fire-fighting Tommies . . . In a seasonal message Defence Secretary Fred Mulley thanked the servicemen for their "courage, skill and stamina". He also praised their families for their tolerance.' There was an element of self-congratulation too: the implication being that the *country* had done well, in the best British tradition of coping with emergencies and fair play: the *Guardian* balanced its report of Mr Mulley's message with a picture of metalworkers handing over a turkey to a group of firemen.

The picture now of the firemen was as a bunch of unfortunates with a shambolic leadership – a view shared by *The Times* and the *Express*, though slightly differently expressed. *The Times* observed that the firemen's 'conviction of rightness, together with a lack of familiarity with the hard realities of industrial power politics, has caused the strikers to persist in their action with a determination that would be admirable in other contexts. It is no small thing to endure seven weeks without strike pay . . .' The *Express* remarked that 'If the leadership of the Fire Brigades Union were not so amateurish, that offer when made in November could have been snapped up and claimed as a moral victory . . .' It sounds a little as though it had been a nice strike, after all. But of course there is a sting in the tail. 'There are lessons to be learned from this strike,' says the *Express*. 'Are the fire brigades overmanned? This is a question worth looking into, in view of the easy way the country has coped with the strike. Many firemen have little to do most of the time, and a number of them take part-time jobs.' *Of course* they take part-time jobs, because they are badly paid. Which is where we came in.

John Paine

Tales from the Old Bailey

The wit and wisdom of Her Majesty's Judges is legendary. Melford Stevenson recently pooh-poohed the idea that he was a reactionary: 'I've subscribed to the NEW STATESMAN for years – my doctor prescribed it for my low blood pressure.' Its therapeutic use, however, is largely over for His Lordship: 'it's too damned dull'. Not as funny, anyway, as the stories you hear these days in the Temple. Here's one that currently has the Benchers in stitches: counsel representing a black workman was doing his best to explain to a sleepy High Court judge how his client's foot came to be mangled when caught in a loader. Comprehension dawned upon His Lordship. 'Ah, I see . . . eenie, meenie, minie mo . . .'.

The appalling thing is that Melford Stevenson and Neil McKinnon are by no means the most biased of judges: they simply trumpet their prejudices louder than the rest. Their Old Bailey courtrooms are in fact fairer places than those subtly manipulated by several of their politely brutal brethren. There is no such thing as an unbiased justice, and even the fairest referee is prone to lapses. The story is told of one judicious man, passed over for a deserved Court of Appeal appointment and in consequence quite fearless in criticising police chicanery, who deviated but once from a 'down the line' summation. He was confronted with a working-class defendant charged with rape, who explained away semen-stained briefs on the basis that he hadn't changed them for three days. How could the jury accept that, His Lordship asked incredulously. Lives there an Englishman who doesn't dress freshly each day? Such stories are the fodder of bar-room gossip, but they add up to the sobering fact that in a court of 26 judges, the defendant's chances, and his length of sentence within a range of about five years, will depend upon the luck of the judicial draw.

This fact is never told in the press, where regular court reporters see themselves as a loyal part of the court establishment. Nor is it recognised by Labour MPs who bay for impeachment only after rare displays of leniency, and then usually get their analysis wrong anyway. (Guardsman Holdsworth, one recent case in point, had his sentence reduced not because the judges were male chauvinist pigs, but because they were protective of serving soldiers.) Labour MPs never seem to realise that the blame for prejudiced personae in the judiciary rests on the shoulders of their own extremely conservative Lord Chancellor and their own jellyfish Attorney-General. The Lord Chancellor's Department keeps voluminous files on barristers, carefully noting any character defects – like compassion, or sympathy with socialism – which would disqualify them from judicial office. Old Bailey judges are frequently culled from the ranks of prosecuting counsel and, once appointed, the Lord Chancellor loses interest in their performance. The worst judge in England currently sits in a London court where for years he has been the despair of the probation service and the Bar. Nothing has been done to remove him. Admittedly, after some criticism of reactionary appointments, two High Court appointments vaguely tinged with liberalism have now been made. And whence have James Comyn and Ronald Waterhouse been consigned? To the Family Division of the High Court, where Morris Finer spent his lamentably few remaining years, unable to affect the mainstream of Lord Widgery's law.

Labour MPs did not seem to mind the fact that Mr Michael Coombe (who sits as an Old Bailey Recorder) made a much publicised attack on the NCCL in the course of a recent Official Secrets committal hearing but their hue and cry against '68-year-old' Neil McKinnon is virulent. Ironically,

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he is one of the very few judges whose views chime with some NCCL principles. Admittedly, his 'liberalism' is terribly dated – he is a vintage refugee from 'White Australia', a decade before John Pilger and light years away from Patricia Hewitt. He loathes violence, but does not share treasury counsel's obsession with the sort of vice John Stuart Mill argued should fall outside the criminal calendar. He is believed to be the only English judge who has ever summed up *for* the defence in an obscenity case under the 1959 Act, and he has repeatedly imposed derisory fines on the victims of *News of the World* exposés (which perhaps explains the self-righteous vigour of that newspaper's condemnation of 'Nigger McKinnon'). His refusal to condemn the 'permissive society' has led to demands for his impeachment by the Festival of Light, who put it all down to the fact that his much-photographed daughter lives with a disc jockey. He normally displays robust common sense, all too rare in criminal judges, and will be remembered with affection by a group of 'phone-freaks' who walked out of his court acquitted of the ludicrous charge of 'conspiracy to steal electricity'. He is not the first to agonise over Section 6 of the Race Relations Act (the NCCL is still debating the competing claims of free speech and racialist speech) and his comment 'we still live in a free country – thank God' may not be perceptive, but at least it strikes a chord.

Law in England, and in England alone, is run by old men. Australia possesses several of the best judges in the common law world, and they are half Judge McKinnon's age. A new breed of judges in America, and magistrates in France, have kept the law in touch with modern needs. In England, the position is bleak: with the current appointment age (mid-50s) we will wait 20 years for a majority of High Court appointees of the kind who might take the NEW STATESMAN for other than medical reasons, and then no doubt they will be reactionaries in their time. Not that there are many radical barristers in the offing – the very idea is a contradiction in terms. But there are a number of decent and liberal lawyers and (heresy of heresies) legal academics who would be worth appointment by a Lord Chancellor braver than Elwyn-Jones.

So long as our courts are run by 68-year-olds, and 68-year-olds who for the most part are not as nice even as Neil McKinnon, one terrible thought haunts me. It goes against all my legal training, against all my civilised beliefs, against probably my NS subscription. It is this: next time I am confronted by someone who says, just after a black man has been murdered, 'one down and one million to go', I will not report him to Mr Silkin – who might, 18 months later, bring him to court for a triumphant acquittal by a judge and jury enamoured of free speech. No, I will beat him up – not badly (charges of actual bodily harm not grievous bodily harm). I will plead not guilty, and run a political defence, that of 'necessity' (some nice unresolved legal problems there). Then, with a jury of my peers, which seven challenges might have allowed (now thanks to Labour lawyers, I have only three) I might be triumphantly acquitted, and strike a real blow against racialism. Sum that one up, Judge McKinnon.

Ian Black

Digging in on the West Bank

The euphoria has worn off noticeably since Menachem Begin came back from Ismailia on Boxing Day from his meeting with the Egyptian President. Even the Israeli Prime Minister's apparently irrepressible humour ('How we schlepped those stones,' he quipped, flying over the Pyramids) could not hide the fact that the talks had been disappointing and that the deadlock that everyone feared had been only narrowly averted. The cynics, the satirists and muckrakers, forced in spite of themselves for over a month to share the general Israeli enthusiasm for the doubtful charms of Cairene belly-dancers and the pleasures of Nile cruises, are back in business again. The Egyptians, too, are expressing their doubts about the sincerity of Israeli intentions. However infelicitous the choice of words, the comparison of Begin to Shylock by the editor of the influential *Akhbar-Al-Yom* seems to reflect a feeling in Egypt that Sadat is just not getting his money's worth.

The Israeli Prime Minister has pulled many rabbits out of his hat over the last few weeks, raising the hackles of supporters and opponents alike; but even the most assiduous of Begin-watchers are hard pushed to imagine what else he can offer. He has declared repeatedly that the Government's plan is final and that he will never countenance anything more than limited self-rule for the Arab population of the occupied territories. His constant reiteration of the permanency of Israeli military presence in the West Bank, though, and his promises of continued settlement there, have not prevented the emergence of a vociferous opposition to the plan even from some of his erstwhile political bedfellows.

Nor has criticism been confined to the noisy and emotional guardians of the land of Israel. Alignment leaders, still unaccustomed to their uncomfortable Opposition role, and conspicuously sullen since Begin stole the limelight, have centred their objections on the danger that the self-rule plan may well be the first stage in the creation of a Palestinian state. A suddenly self-confident Yitzhak Rabin, an increasingly sulky Shimon Peres and the ever-mellifluous Abba Eban have all been judiciously reminding the electorate of what would have happened if an Alignment government had come up with Begin's proposals. Begin, Rabin pointed out wryly, does not have Begin in Opposition.

Bitching and sour grapes apart, the Alignment does have one serious point. Any settlement of the Palestinian issue, it argues, should take place within the framework of some kind of link with Jordan, not out of love for the Hashemite kingdom. But, as one political commentator observed, because it is possible to 'trust Jordan, with its record of September 1970, to put paid to any lingering recalcitrance or pro-PLO sympathies'. Yet the Jordanian seat for the moment remains empty and seems likely to stay unoccupied for the immediate future. Moreover the nub of Begin's limited autonomy offer for the people of the West Bank is that it is intended as a permanent and not a temporary settlement of the problem. Whatever else the plan has done – and it has temporarily postponed the prospect, dear to the Prime Minister's heart, of the extension of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank – it has not come to grips with the central issue, the demand that Israel renounce its claim to it.

It is hard to say to what extent the apparent finality of the Israeli offer will prove a stumbling block to the course of the political discussions due to open at the Jerusalem Hilton next week. Recent developments, including the much publicised extension of existing Israeli settlements in Northern Sinai (one of which has accepted Mr and Mrs Begin as members) have so far provoked nothing more than verbal reproaches from Egypt and America, and the talks in Cairo and Jerusalem are going ahead as planned. All this would seem to suggest that a separate peace between Egypt and Israel, after some haggling over details in Sinai and some face-saving manoeuvres to placate the 'rejectionists' on either side, is not to be ruled out.

The West Bankers, of course, are unhappy with this scenario and have repeatedly rejected Begin's plan, pointing out that they were offered such limited local autonomy by the Labour government not long after the 1967 war. Even the moderate pro-Jordanian leadership, nurtured by the Israeli military authorities, has found nothing in the plan to recommend its acceptance. At a meeting I attended on New Year's Day, marking the 13th (unlucky?) birthday of the PLO, one young man told me that the two collaborators murdered recently on the West Bank deserved to die and that more such executions could be expected in the near future. Amidst a mass of the checked *Keffiyehs*, which have become the symbol of their cause, the audience of largely teenage refugees – students in a United Nations vocational training centre near Ramallah – called repeatedly for the recognition of the PLO as their only legitimate representative and stood in silence to commemorate the martyrs of the Palestinian revolution.

Although the gap is closing – or may even have closed already – over Sinai, the future of the West Bank seems as uncertain and cloudy as ever. Asked how the Government would prevent self-rule in Judea and Samaria from turning into the basis for a Palestinian state, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan replied unequivocally that there would be no hesitation in using the Israeli army to stop this happening. It is a chilling prospect which, for the moment at least, seems unlikely to be affected by whatever is agreed between Cairo and Jerusalem.

Jerusalem

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Christopher Hitchens

Two Dictatorships

For a military dictator, General Videla of Argentina looks quite sympathetic. He listens attentively, soft eyes watching as you speak, and plenty of understanding nods as you go along. He likes to present his government as a soldierly duty undertaken by patriots who were left no other recourse by terrorism and chaos. The resemblance to Franco only emerges when he begins to speak himself. He stresses the Western and Christian character of his country – a theme amplified by posters and propaganda all over Buenos Aires. He expresses regrets about such unpleasantness as prisoners, corpses, 'excesses', but insists that in a war – the 'Third World War' against Marxism which is fought very fervently in this part of the world – there will, sadly, be innocent casualties. I raise with him the case of a vanished girl, a paraplegic, whose mother is known to me. Surely she could have been neither a terrorist nor an absconder? Well, says the General, it sounds as if she must have been guilty of ideological crimes. To my blank response he adds that terrorism is not simply a matter of guns and bombs, but of ideas, and that these last are the most dangerous of all. 'We consider it a great crime to attempt against the Western and Christian style of life in order to change it'. That's what my notebook says. But he denies absolutely ('*rotundamente*') that Argentina holds any prisoners of conscience.

I saw Videla in the extraordinary pink palace once inhabited by Eva Perón. Her husband, once described by Dean Acheson as 'a fascist and a dictator detested by all good men – except Argentinians' is dead, but still has the power to move masses. Evita herself is buried in a grand cemetery after her years of mummified peregrination, but the vault bears only the family name of Duarte. A few pathetic scrawls – 'mother of the poor', 'protector of the oppressed' on the ironwork, and a few flowers stuffed in the grille are all that mark her grave.

There are many families in Argentina who would give a lot for even that much. They are the relatives of the *desaparecidos*, the disappeared ones. They would, grotesquely enough, be delighted if their sons or husbands or wives were in prison, because then they would at least know if they were alive. Since estimates of disappeared people run as high as 15,000, there are many families in this macabre condition.

Recently, a group of bereft relatives hired a famous Dutch clairvoyant to see if he could trace their kin. Others gather every Thursday in the Plaza Mayor to brave the police and to publicise their case. This nightmare world, compounded of elements by Borges and by Graham Greene, is one into which they welcome outsiders. I took some letters from Amnesty International to the offices of a committee which follows the situation. The ante-room was full of women, varying in age but predominantly dressed in black, who meet there to console each other. After my brief pidgin exchange with the organiser, a fat and tireless man with the look of a professional politico, I make to leave, but he claps his hands to speak about the young man who has come a long way in a good cause. All at once my hand is wrung, my cheeks kissed by a gaggle of tearful girls and women, each with a frightful story and each with the hope that this mere courier can be helpful. I feel present under false pretences.

I returned from seeing the President a few days later, and two or three of the mothers, by now friendly with me, were waiting in the hotel lobby. One of them, in tears, told me that yet another blow had fallen. Until then, the groups of relatives had been left alone in their public activities, but the previous night a dozen of them had been seized outside a church and taken away in unmarked police cars (the usual scenario of a 'snatch'). They have not been heard of since.

V. S. Naipaul has observed that the failure of Argentina as a country is one of the great mysteries of our time. Hugely spacious and well-endowed, it has tremendous fertility and wealth, with a population untroubled by any serious racial or religious differences. Buenos Aires is a vast, chic, cosmopolitan city, blending Italian, French and Spanish styles. Early capitalism furnished the country with a sound infrastructure of productive capacity, plus the famous railway network. Few really starve. Most can read. And yet it has never been able to civilise itself politically. Some see only one reason for this. When I paid a call on Borges, he quoted Blunden from memory to the effect that:

> This was my country, and it might be yet
> But something came between us and the sun.

That something, he left me in no doubt, was Juan Perón. The new regime would agree. Certainly Perón was a demagogue, a phoney *macho* and a bully as well as a buffoon. But the last phase of his rule came about, by an overwhelming popular franchise, precisely because the army in power had reproduced these qualities.

A large number of Argentines certainly welcomed the 1975 coup. But they did not bargain for the consequences. All political liberty suspended. Torture and kidnap used routinely as a means of discipline. Corpses discovered at random, and living bodies abstracted the same way. The whole apparatus of the *chupando* (or 'vacuuming out') which forms part of the grim anti-terrorist argot. In effect, a warlord system where army, navy, air force, police and freelance fascist bands have their own prisons, a free hand and are answerable to no one: in that chaotic sense more terrifying than a rigid and predictable dictatorship would be.

Yes of course we want to return to civilian rule, Videla says, but we don't just want democracy. We want 'the other democracy', where order and stability come first. The other democracy. In South America, where mostly military dictatorships hold the ring between foreign capital, the left opposition, the Americans and the Church, 'the other democracy' may be the key phrase. It describes the uneven emergence, in Argentina, Chile, Brazil and elsewhere of societies which are not quite totalitarian but are rendered impervious to real democracy: which are not quite colonies but are dominated by foreign capital and technique. And, more irrationally, which are not strategically threatened by any major external foe but which groan under enormously expensive and well-equipped military establishments. If you like, a sort of staging-post between underdevelopment and development, mediated by a quasi-fascist ideology. Fascism without a public works programme for the unemployed.

You can see it in the Finance Ministry, where I met the Secretary for Foreign Investment. Señor Dumas sat in a beautiful room, where the walls were so choked with pictures of past ministers that there was no space for any more. Surrounded with these symbols of vacillation, he made a brisk contrasting impression. Looking and sounding like a graduate of the Harvard Business School (which I believe he is) and like a student of Milton Friedman (which I'm sure he must be) he laid out the new national approach. He tactfully ignored the political preconditions which are necessary for this kind of thing, but the message was clear. No more subsidy. No more public ownership. If it doesn't pay – let it go bust. If it makes a profit – sell it back to the private sector. Encourage the foreign investor. Cost effectiveness at all costs. *Balance the budget.*

The strategy is reassuring to some and, after the derelict and corrupt days of Perón's demented widow, it must be positively refreshing to others. At least the national treasury is no longer debauched by men like the famous Lopez Rega, who thought he was in touch with the Archangel Michael and rewarded himself commensurately. But already, like 'the other democracy', the new capitalism is encountering difficulty. Wage-earners see themselves penalised heavily, with unemployment high and threatening to worsen. A handful of financiers and industrialists (Argentine industry is heavily conglomerated) are very conspicuously the winners. A faction of the ruling junta favour a policy of 'development' which depends on more public intervention and expenditure, and which would have the effect of reducing working-class dissent.

Last autumn's major rail strike highlighted these difficulties. Now people speak openly of figures like Admiral Emilio Massera, a tough guy of Sicilian descent who combines the hard-line military virtues with a potential populist appeal. People also speak of Hidalgo Sola, who was Videla's personal envoy to Venezuela, and who made a speech talking moderately of a phased return to civilan rule, and who was abducted near his house in the summer, and who has not been seen since. Inter-service rivalries abound, and of course in a country where almost every public post, and some private ones, is filled by an officer, there are many inducements for the forces to think up

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PAUL McCARTNEY: SONGSMITH

An interview with Paul McCartney, talking seriously about his songs – how he writes them, and what influences him, filmed while he was recording "Mull of Kintyre", will be the principal item in the first edition of THE SOUTH BANK SHOW a new arts programme edited and presented by Melvyn Bragg.

Other items in the first programme include a first look at Fred Zinneman's latest film, "Julia", starring Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave: a visit to the massive Surrealist Exhibition: and a *preview* of David Mercer's TV play "Flint".
Studio Reviewers Germaine Greer and Gerald Scarfe.

THE SOUTH BANK SHOW

from London Weekend Television

STARTS THIS SATURDAY AT 10·15 pm on ITV

Future editions of THE SOUTH BANK SHOW will include filmed portraits of Harold Pinter, Khatchaturian, Dennis Potter, Alan Howard, Satyajit Ray, Ken Dodd, Norman Mailer, Hal Prince, Francoise Sagan. There will be programmes about Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Paganini Variations', Edna O'Brien in Arabia, Sir Granville Bantock, Paul Morrissey on British Comedy, Ted Hughes' poems, Kenneth MacMillan's 'Mayerling', Robert Cohan's London Contemporary Dance, Michael Holroyd's Biography of G.B. Shaw, Jacques Loussier, John Arden and Lord Clark. James Ivory and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala are in India for a specially commissioned arts feature. Studio reviews of films, TV, books, music, theatre, exhibitions and events in the arts will be a regular weekly feature.

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reasons for remaining in power. Counter-revolutions devour their children too.

So there are internal strains enough. There are also external ones. Time was when the White House and the Pentagon gave a blank cheque to uniformed despotism in South America: even installing it when democracy threatened. The Carter dispensation is, at least publicly, different. While it will not do anything to destabilise its military and capitalist allies, it will and does speak plainly to them about human rights. It even votes with Cuba against Chile at the United Nations. Argentina has escaped this degree of odium because its relations with Russia are good – the USSR is a major buyer and has defended the junta several times in international forums.

But people who, five years ago, would never have gone near the US Embassy unless with a banner and a bottle, now queue for appointments with the human rights attaché. Cyrus Vance's visit, scheduled as a boring affair, was electrified by his delivery, admittedly non-commital, of a list of nearly 15,000 people, more information on whose whereabouts was deemed to be desirable. A British journalist who has seen the inside of the Buenos Aires central police prison (he says you can hear the screams all right, as there are only cops and prisoners there to hear) told me that in the prisoners' bathroom an old graffito 'Americans get out' had been amended to 'Americans get us out'.

Argentina is very sensitive to its international reputation, so some small improvement may be expected. The Government is, for instance, very embarrassed about the case of Jacobo Timmerman, a Jewish newspaper publisher held in prison despite being acquitted by a court martial of any terrorist connection. He is, however, thought to have been close to David Graiver, another Jew and a banker who seems to have floated his banks on guerrilla ransom money. Graiver is dead now, but to the paranoid Argentine Right, who are heavily infested with anti-semitism, the idea of a Jewish finance-Marxist tie up is irresistible.

Argentina is chaotic, eccentric, colourful and violent. If it is the Italy or the Spain of the dictators' club, then Chile is the Prussia. Politics there are much easier to follow and understand – the régime makes every effort to keep them simple. There is, for example, an almost charming transparency about the attitude of the 'Gang of Four' service chiefs who make up the junta. It was shown in the ungainly public disagreement last week, between Pinochet who wanted to ask a referendum question so laughably loaded that it would have made de Gaulle or Salazar blush, and the remaining panjandrums who openly said that the Chilean people couldn't even be trusted that far. To make things more emphatic, the polling station for Santiago was the same football stadium used as a detention and torture centre after the 1973 coup.

Three features of Chile strike the eye at once. The first is the astounding hubris of the upper classes, who are now gorged with a boom of imported goods and luxuries surpassing anything they have ever known. In the *barrio alto*, and in the offices of the business establishment paper *El Mercurio*, there is a porcine optimism and complacency. The second feature, as you might expect, is the extraordinary discontent and misery among the poor. The third is the primitive political policy of the ruling group; more ambiguous on close examination.

In Chile, if you disappear, your family does know who has taken you. The secret police, under their new name and apparently more tactful command, are centrally organised. Only a dozen people disappeared without trace last year, compared with a hundred or so the year before. The number of political prisoners is in the low hundreds. Noises have even been made about a return to civilian rule. But with its other hand, the junta is squeezing even the Christian Democratic faction, is installing a system of internal exile for trade union protestors, and is stoking the fires of social tension.

Although even in central Santiago there are plenty of beggars and paupers on view, the real *miseria* is to be found in the slum and shanty towns on the outskirts of town. I was the guest of a Catholic Father who, after asking me the usual questions about Paul Johnson's conversion, explained his parish. He told me that they had to start soup kitchens as a cordon against death among the children; that the new minimum wage and employment laws (providing a much-exploited 'floor' described to me memorably by a Christian Democratic journalist as 'infra-human') were regarded as insulting; that many poor families were too proud to let their children eat at the Church and thus ate petfood or (sometimes) their pets. There were bright moments in his account – women and mothers have been somewhat emancipated in their new roles as feeders of families where the bread-winner is idle. And sombre ones too – poverty and desperation breed a network of informers; and strangers are viewed (as I found) with extreme suspicion.

My priestly friend was rather unruffled, in the circumstances of a probable 400,000 (or 12 per cent) unemployment, by the hatred which he said was festering in the slums. He mentioned the furious reaction on the part of those who, watching Pinochet on television, heard him describe the deportation of union dissidents to freezing border villages as 'sending them for a holiday'.

It is important to remember that the Chilean coup was not just any old Latin American *putsch*. Planned in outline long before Allende came to power (in case there are still people who believe it was a response to 'breakdown'), it was a thoroughgoing counter-revolution; designed not just to displace a socialist government but to destroy and shatter the whole social basis of the Left, and the liberal, European constitutional context which sustained it. This is what explains not just the initial bloodbath of socialist militants (we'll never know quite how many), not just the vicious police terror which still persists in modified form, not just the brutal, conservative economic policy, but also the way in which Chile has been depopulated of academics, journalists, lawyers and intellectuals – hundreds of thousands of whom have opted for exile.

Meeting Chilean dissidents is easier than it is in Argentina – they still behave riskily and erratically. They are not case-hardened, as Argentina's are, by the years of dictatorship and repression. They still can't get used to it, never thought it would happen to their civilised, gentle, wine-growing land. One of them, a Christian Democrat whose job in radio was being abolished, talked to me about the cultural obliteration which has choked the bookstalls with trash and denuded the universities and the media. 'I feel,' he said, 'like a foreign correspondent in my own country'.

One mentions the Christian Democrats because they are, in one sense, a better index of how extensive the opposition is to the Pinochet gang. They also squeal more loudly in protest because they thought, wrongly, that the coup would benefit them. During Allende's last months they joined gleefully in the violence, the sabotage and the class hatred. The expressions on their faces, after the seizure of power, when they found they were of no further use to the army, were pitiful to see. Personally, I think this the only wholesome decision the junta has taken. Had it been otherwise, Christian Democrats elsewhere might have been tempted to flirt with 'authoritarian' solutions. As it is, they must join the ranks of liberty.

Chile's lifeblood is its rich copper ore. Allende used to call it 'Chile's wage'. Its nationalisation under his rule was supported unanimously by all political parties. If you now turn up the October 1977 issue of *Copper Studies*, published in New York as a subscription briefing for copper companies in the US, you will find some astounding disclosures in the sober professional text. Reviewing a recent major US-Chile contract, the bulletin notes that the tax-holiday concessions 'freezing the rate for 30 years, represents an important and unusual concession by Chile to the company's demand for investment security'. The article goes on to observe that 'a notable omission is the question of environmental protection and pollution control, which are not mentioned anywhere in the agreement'. You bet they aren't, and nor are any other inconveniences. This is the way in which Chile's notorious inflation rate has been brought down. And, of course, there is no 'destabilisation' from foreign sources when the Right is in the saddle and plying the whip. To the contrary, American banks are buying up Chile's profuse IOUs with alacrity, 'falling all over each other to make loans' as *Business International* commented last year. This mortgaging of the country's resources to outside interests makes a nice setting for the national chauvinist atmosphere whipped up by junta supporters for last week's 'referendum'.

Of course, many Chileans do resent being condemned by the UN in a vote which put Uganda's delegate on the other side from themselves. But my impression in a short visit is that they are acutely conscious of what they have lost in the way of liberty. I hardly think that such a previously reactionary Church hierarchy as the Chilean one would risk what it has risked if it was not in response to a feeling among the flock. At the moment, the Cardinal plays much the same role as his Polish counterpart – not forming part of the opposition himself but acting as an umbrella and a guarantor for those who do.

The political future is certainly grim enough; Chilean society has been permanently maimed whatever happens. But there

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are 'enlightened' elements here and elsewhere who know that if the army remains in power it must, in the long run, accept the blame for any failures. As the Greeks found, there are few officers, however megalomaniac, who wish to shoulder this kind of burden. What we may see, hand in hand with the neo-brutalist economic policy, is a 'Turkish solution' where the armed forces look continually over the shoulder of a tame civilian and constitutional set-up, only intervening if matters get out of hand. The formula of a strong political state and a laissez-faire civil society is the one which the soldiers and 'intellectuals' of Brasilia, Buenos Aires and Santiago wish to apply. If they can make the world look the other way for a bit, they might get away with it.

For the Left, the whole thing represents a colossal defeat. When they opted for a quasi-Castroite struggle in Argentina, with huge detachments of armed men in the field, they were taken on and beaten in open battle. When, in the more conventional circumstances of Chile, they chose pluralism and gradualism, they were met first with economic warfare from the Nixon-Kissinger HQ and then with naked violence from a fanatical officer corps after the softening up was completed. These lessons were bought with thousands of lives, and have not been assimilated yet.

Last year in the *Daily Telegraph* there appeared an article on exactly this subject. It contained so many flat and ghastly misstatements of fact (only one political prisoner in Chile) and so many pieces of outrageous special pleading ('were the human rights of those incinerated at Dresden and Hiroshima carefully considered?') that it wouldn't be worth mentioning in the ordinary way. But it was written by Brian Crozier, one of the leading 'intellectuals' and organisers of the British New Right. He, too, would like to see economics taken out of politics, with decisions of the market untouched by vulgar pressure. He, too, can see that if you want to do that, and if you are not dealing with stupefied peasants, you need an apparatus of repression to prevent demands being made on Smithian purity. He, too, accepts the necessary and regrettable price that must be paid for this readjustment of things.

Chile and Argentina were (and are) inhabited by sophisticated people who do not wish to be abandoned by the economic process, with budget-balancing policies reducing productive capacity as fast as they reduce 'inflation'. They are well aware that as far as the present world division of labour is concerned, there are many reasons why they should never have been born. But they may yet reject the logic of 'the other democracy'.

Patrick Wintour & John Hughes

The Western Front

In the last year the National Front has grown sufficiently in the South West to be ready to fight some of its first rural constituencies there at the next general election. In the region's quiet towns and villages a coloured face is hard to find, agriculture is dominant while, with the important exception of David Owen in Devonport, it is Tory and Liberal supremacy that is being disturbed. This time last year the whole NF West of England and South Wales area was controlled from Bristol; in March 1977 Dorset, Devon and Cornwall came to be organised from Poole; in November the NF felt themselves strong enough in these counties to warrant making Devon and Cornwall an organisation area in its own right. And yet 18 months ago there were only four NF members in the whole of Cornwall.

There are now full branches in Bodmin and Plymouth, where the NF claim 80 members. The recent arrival in Torbay of Keith Jowsey, former West Midlands organiser and Ladywood by-election agent, has prompted the birth of another branch in South Devon with 57 members. According to the NF rulebook, a branch is committed to field at least one candidate in any local or parliamentary election. There are also NF groups scattered throughout the two counties, including one of 13 members in tiny Princetown, village of Dartmoor Prison, and another of 29 in nearby Tavistock where prison officers live. In one county and two district council elections, NF polls have ranged from 3 to 7 per cent. The political ugliness that tails the Front has also surfaced. In Plymouth, a spate of slogans like 'Pull the Trigger – Kill a Nigger' appeared early in 1977. A few months previously, the founding of the Bodmin NF group led to violence. An attempt at a triumphal visit to Plymouth last September by John Tyndall ended up with the Front meeting in Polbathic, 30 miles away, after clashes between the NF and anti-fascists.

Though the NF dovetail naturally into the 'Little England' patriotism of the area, they have been forced to re-order their usual priorities. The Devon and Cornwall NF Regional Organiser, Nigel Hedger, 'begged head office to get out the "You Are Being Robbed" leaflet on the EEC. All they were producing was stuff with maps of the country; one side was white and one was black, and that did not go down so well in this area.' It is over the EEC that the NF have reaped their best harvest and received funds from local farmers. They say that in an area of livestock and dairy farming, it is hard for local pig farmers to compete when the EEC provides subsidies on stock shipped to Britain. The soil makes it difficult for them to turn to arable farming. In the area's fishing ports, the Front campaigns for a 200-mile limit and points a finger at Dr Owen for encouraging the vast Spanish and Portuguese fleets to enter the EEC. The NF can also press the issue of defence, since the armed forces employ a huge network of servicemen and dockyard workers in the area. Gordon Cummins, a spokesman for Plymouth NF, says: 'The Tories, whom I call an international party, do nothing about defence'. The Front now have recruits among servicemen distributing literature in barracks and messes. The fear of cuts reinforces the Front's propaganda on local unemployment, which reaches 16 per cent in some villages. 'This is the Cinderella of England', Adrian Cooper, chairman of Bodmin NF says of Cornwall.

Facilitated by the media's portrayal of modern urban values, the NF trade on the fear of change. They pledge to protect the West Country from communism, the film *The Exorcist*, immigrants, traffic jams, Chinese fish and chip shops, pornography. It is as if NF seek to resurrect a lost sense of authority and structure in rural life. For example, discussions on 'Law and Order' inevitably refer to the replacement of village bobbies with a panda car roaring through the village. As for the decaying church, Mr Cooper, whose moral preoccupations sound as much like Mary Whitehouse as Martin Webster, said that it was either 'infected by Marxist-Communist Christians' or suffers from 'a terrible liberalistic attitude.' The NF express concern about threats to religious education in schools and store much faith in the Young National Front groups (recently formed at Comprehensives in Saltash, Barnstaple and Bodmin) howling down 'Marxist indoctrinators'. Anxiety about teacher bias is ironic enough, for Ian Souther-Clarence, former South West NF organiser and an ex SAS man, trained a Poole school cadet force in SAS drill using replica SS daggers.

The YNF have been complaining about the lack of facilities in the area, though the HQ have opened a national summer family camp at Lancorla Farm near Bodmin. As Mr Cummins explained: 'People don't like to feel alone. We try to make members as active as possible. The more active they become, the more they identify themselves with the NF.' Mr Hedger also stressed action: 'I attend nearly all the NF meetings, and policies as such are very rarely mentioned. It's more or less which areas are you going to descend on next week. I don't feel the need to discuss policy amongst ourselves.' Methods of recruitment involve only a little more argument, they place emphasis on capturing 'one forceful figure in a village' to win over other voters. Mr Cummins likes to take round copies of the *Daily Express* and *Daily Telegraph*, pointing out items like the *Telegraph*'s recent story about a black girl who refused to go back to Rhodesia until they introduce the dole for those who don't like to work. On doorsteps, he asks home-owners what they think will happen to house prices if three Asian families moved in down the road. The possibility of the NF winning their first parliamentary seat in a rural area, as Cummins claims they will, is a little more than remote. Disturbing as the Front's progress is, the Tories are well enough organised in the area to try and stop the bloodletting quickly by hardening up on the issues the NF are exploiting. On some issues though they do not have a totally free hand.

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Profile: Conor Cruise O'Brien

Editor in Excelsis

Last month's announcement that Conor Cruise O'Brien was to be editor-in-chief of the *Observer* took more people than the paper's own staff totally by surprise. Indeed, in the same week as the announcement was made *Newsweek*, as ill-luck would have it, carried a feature on the *Observer* which – though it went on at some length about the paper's problems – carried not the slightest hint of O'Brien's impending arrival. Yet his appointment had even by then been agreed for at least a month. It was on 10 November last that O'Brien found himself invited to visit Lord Goodman's flat in Portland Place. He is very funny about the experience. Never having been there before, he alighted at the wrong floor – to be greeted by an aristocratic lady 'who regarded me with no great air of approval'. But it was her opening remark that really cut him down to size: 'I think,' she said coldly, 'that you *must* be someone for Lord Goodman.'

She was, in fact, more accurate than she may have known. There has been no dearth of *Observer* figures claiming responsibility for O'Brien's appointment but the idea certainly originated with the old firm of Goodman and Astor. The seed was planted at the Anglo-Irish conference held in Oxford last September, the gathering at which O'Brien's own speech suggesting that there was no genuine demand for Irish unity caused such a stir. At dinner that evening in St Edmund Hall O'Brien was carefully placed next to Lord Goodman, and the next morning he was driven back to London by David Astor. Nothing at that stage was said (beyond suggesting an article based on the speech for the following Sunday) but Astor from that moment on was in no doubt that he had found the replica of himself that he all along had secretly wanted.

The coup required careful planning. For one thing, Astor and Goodman, though they linger on as directors of the paper, no longer control the *Observer*. The bills nowadays are paid not by David Astor but by the American oil company Atlantic Richfield and boardroom interference (though it still surfaces occasionally from Lord Goodman) comes today primarily from Lord Barnetson, who, somewhat incongruously, combines the chairmanship of United Newspapers (the former Yorkshire Conservative Newspapers) with being chairman of the supposedly independent *Observer*.

The first thing that needed to be done, therefore, was to persuade Lord Barnetson (who had already made some slightly contradictory dispositions of his own from the *Glasgow Herald* in the editorial department) – to say nothing of Mr Robert O. Anderson, the chairman of Atlantic Richfield – of the appropriateness of O'Brien's appointment. Both men are said to have been present at the meeting in Lord Goodman's flat and in the end the task did not prove too difficult – though a certain delicacy was attached to it as Mr Anderson already had his own viceroy on the *Observer* premises in the person of the former LBJ White House aide, Mr Douglass Cater. Mr Cater, however, does not seem to have been in on the plot, any more than were some other directors of the *Observer* (one at least of whom learned of O'Brien's appointment only 48 hours before it was announced).

But then the battle-weary *Observer*'s staff was also kept in total ignorance – with the possible exception of the ubiquitous Mr Kenneth Harris who, in the week before the announcement was made, could be found going round the *Observer*'s offices saying: 'Tell me, I'm rather worried about the *Spectator*. Do you,' bouncing the while on his heels, 'do you think Conor Cruise O'Brien might conceivably make an editor for it?' Confronted by this bizarre display, the shrewder *Observer* hands concluded that they were being addressed in code and, accordingly, were not wholly surprised when they found themselves being rung up the following Saturday by an understandably embarrassed *Observer* editor, Donald Trelford, with the news that O'Brien was to become their new editor in excelsis.

The signs are that O'Brien intends to function in excelsis. He arrived in the paper only last week and immediately took up residence not on the second floor, where most of the work goes on, but on the fourth floor, where most of the entertaining is done. He is wisely wary of any questions about his plans for the paper's future – though his mere presence certainly gives its own assurance that the *Observer* will not, after all, be going 'down-market' – and he confines his answers to the kind of articles he himself feels he would like to write. He is very keen to visit China, intends from his vantage point of lecturing at the University of Vincennes to write about France and

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has some articles already in preparation about South Africa which he has just visited. He says he 'hopes' to be able to give four days a week to the *Observer*, but, more revealing perhaps even than that, is his apparent determination to hang on to his Senate seat in the Irish Parliament and not to abandon his home in the fishing village of Howth looking out over Dublin Bay.

It is this indigenous insistence of his, presumably accepted both by the new firm of Atlantic Richfield and the old firm of Astor and Goodman, that lends a certain point to the letter of protest over his appointment that appeared in *The Times* just before Christmas. Written by, of all people, a *Guardian* leader-writer, it questioned the propriety of 'a foreign politician' being permitted to guide the policy of 'one of our leading national newspapers'. Inevitably, it sounded insular in approach and jingoistic in tone. Yet even domestic working politicians have not been universally successful in guiding the fortunes of papers; and one functioning abroad, it might have been thought, is liable to find the dual tug on his loyalties even more difficult.

Just how ambivalent the position of the politician/journalist can be the *Observer* files, in fact, already demonstrate. As the British Government's best friend over the water, O'Brien likes to claim a consistent record. It is not as consistent as all that. In the wake of 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry, an article appeared on the *Observer*'s leader page on 6 February 1972 signed by Conor Cruise O'Brien arguing as unequivocally as Mr Lynch this week for a date to be fixed for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland: 'it is only in this direction,' O'Brien then wrote, 'that there lies any hope of avoiding the shattering series of disasters that lie before us if the British Government continues on its present road.' Today, as the flail of the 'Troops Out' movement and the dedicated enemy of Mr Lynch, O'Brien claims that his judgment at the time was 'clouded' (by, he wittily hints, contact with Mr Maudling). It seems, however, at least equally likely that his judgment was at that stage wonderfully concentrated – on the impact of 'Bloody Sunday' upon the Irish electorate and in particular on the Labour voters in his own constituency of Dublin North-East (an impression reinforced by his insistence that week that an article the *Observer* already held cleaving to his usual line must not be published and this one used in its place).

It may have been an isolated wobble but then it is his political judgment that has always provided O'Brien's most vulnerable aspect, at least in Establishment eyes. For the moment, he may be on the receiving end of *encomia* from Bernard Levin (to, it must in fairness be said, his evident embarrassment): but it was not always so. Even the *Observer* itself once severely remarked that 'by so adamantly keeping silent on communist excesses he has done himself and his cause disservice'. And certainly in the 17 years he was an Irish diplomat he was far from being considered 'reliable' by either his American or his British counterparts. His excursion into international politics – during the six months in 1961 he was the UN Secretary-General's 'special representative' in Katanga – strengthened the impression of him as something of 'a political cowboy', an impression that neither his book on his experience, *To Katanga and Back*, nor his subsequent play, *Murderous Angels*, did anything to dispel. And for some – even surviving influential voices on the *Observer* – this view of him was confirmed when in 1969, in apparent contradiction to his earlier anti-secessionist stand on Katanga, he ardently (and heroically) took up the cause of Biafra.

Many of his own countrymen would undoubtedly now echo the same doubts about his eight-year adventure in Irish politics. Returning from New York, where after an unhappy three-year stint as vice-chancellor of Ghana University he had been a professor at New York City University, he decided in 1969 at the age of 51 to become a politician in his own homeland on the Labour ticket. It was a time of some excitement for the small Irish Labour Party. It had asserted what was for Irish politics a strong left-wing line and had gone into the 1969 general election with the slogan 'The Seventies Will Be Socialist'. The party was fielding a number of bright candidates but undoubtedly the brightest jewel in its crown was O'Brien – a world-famous intellectual whose works both on history and literature commanded universal respect, a political activist widely admired in the Third World, a figure of transatlantic eminence who had not only opposed the Vietnam war but had been one of the first to expose the manipulations of the CIA. No one then could possibly have predicted that eight years later it would all be over, with O'Brien hounded not just out of Irish politics but (virtually) out of the Irish Labour Party, able to find sanctuary only as an Independent in a reserved seat in the Irish Senate, elected predominantly by the Protestant *alumni* of Trinity College, Dublin.

How did it all go so wrong? O'Brien himself seems to have little answer to the conundrum – except to assert that if you choose to attack 'hypocrisy' (or, to use his own favourite phrase, to 'chip away' at myths) you very soon make enemies. It might also be equally fair to say that if you enter office as Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, (with responsibility for Irish broadcasting) looking like a radical and come out looking like a reactionary (who believes in censorship), you also inevitably change the basis of your support. Yet, astonishingly, the one thought that O'Brien himself does not seem able to entertain is that the perceptible shift among those who now comprise his admirers – Bernard Levin, by his own confession, is a recent recruit – could have anything to do with an equally perceptible shift in his own beliefs. The evidence however, is there in plenty. The man, for example, who in 1963 launched in the NS the first real liberal tomahawk against *Encounter* (and later, when it retaliated, sued it successfully for libel), now not only appears cheerfully enough in its pages but actually has his contributions singled out for special commendation by Melvin Laski, its editor. The same point can be put even more brutally. In the 1960s it would have been hard to conceive of an O'Brien appointment to anything getting the nod from an international oil company; in 1977 it appears to have raised not the slightest qualm even in the breast of the stetson-hatted and Texan-hearted Robert O. Anderson.

Whether he chooses to recognise it or not, O'Brien's recent repressive record and current ideological stance place him at least as a co-belligerent of the strong-arm Right. He does not, as he tirelessly explains, believe in mincing words about 'terrorists' or 'freedom-fighters' (which may well explain the apprehension with which his views on South Africa are awaited in at least some quarters of the *Observer*). The 'romantic' who used to champion the cause of Antigone now looks uncommonly like the 'realist' standing four-square with Creon. No doubt his world vision has been influenced by his bruising experience of Irish politics – and the hope must be that, translated to the softer clime of British politics, he will lose his obsession with defending the state against subversives. If he does not, the *Observer* could yet discover that the figure it has at its helm is not – as it has excitedly claimed at various times over the past month – a Burke, a Swift or even an Orwell: but instead a forbidding reincarnation of the right-wing J. L. Garvin. And that, whatever its recent mistakes and misfortunes, is hardly a fate the paper – or even David Astor – wholly deserves.

IS THERE A PUBLISHER WHO IS NOT AFRAID OF CONTROVERSY?

If it hits him where he lives? Let us say, a non-fiction book about the Ignorant Intellectual Establishment?

In something more than two years' time I have netted two American editorial opinions on such a book. The more articulate says: 'I think you have a publishable manuscript. Your anecdotes are wonderful and you have a very wicked way with words . . . you have a wonderfully pithy way of summing up some very complex ideas and I rather like idiosyncratic books like your own . . . But I also disagreed a lot . . . I think you need an editor whose own idiosyncracies match, or approximate, your own . . . That sounds a lot like censorship, but . . .' The editor went on, in apparent anger, to protest my outrage to the memory of her father, her moral code and, I would suspect, her religion.

Although the book is based on the American experience, its generalities do sufficient damage, I would hope, to the Western cultural scene. Therefore I would ask: Is there a reputable publisher, if not in America, in Great Britain, who is interested in controversy that hits him where he lives?

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London Diary

☐ I can hardly wait for the roar of Establishment disapproval that will greet Group Captain Peter Townsend's autobiography *Time and Chance* when it is published by Collins next month. It is already being serialised in the *Daily Express* and its editor Derek Jameson seemed a very happy fellow when I met him on Tuesday night. Townsend himself – once, as he sharply reminded me, called 'a sentimental tough' by the NS – was still agonising. Had he done the right thing? Did I realise that he had been 'put through three months of torture' by his editor in France (where the book is being published first) even to say as much as he already had? It wasn't, however, that which I so much held against him as his reaction to my one piece of literary criticism. I could not, I told him, conceive of writing of anyone that she had 'a complexion as smooth as a peach'. He looked a bit hurt – but then rallied to answer: 'What else could I say about a Princess?' My main quarrel, though, remains with Jean Rook who, in introducing the Townsend serial in 'the family newspaper' the *Express*, wrote that the question she had 'burned to know for 22 years' (getting even the dates wrong) was how Townsend had felt watching Princess Margaret marry Tony Armstrong-Jones in 1960. It's not exactly the first thing I (or, conceivably even the *Express* 'family' readership) hoped to find out but then Townsend is likely to get into enough trouble already without placing himself within the ambit of the Statute of Treasons (1352) under which 'encompassing the virtue of the King's daughter' still rates not only as High Treason but as a capital offence punishable by death.

☐ If Ms Maureen Colquhoun has really won her appeal against the decision of her constituency party (Northampton North) to ditch her, then I rejoice; and I do so especially because, ever since the row first blew up, she has seemed to me to get very shabby treatment from the Labour movement. *Tribune* didn't seem to really want to know while *Labour Weekly* appeared anxious only to insult her. Yet remarkably the ground on which her appeal is said to have prevailed is precisely the one she has all along, notably in her NS article last October, put in the forefront of her argument: the fact that the meeting of the Park Branch ward on 7 March last year, at which the whole process of getting rid of her originated, was to all intents and purposes 'packed'. The Transport House inquiry has now found that the notice convening that meeting should have given all members advance warning that so important a resolution was to be put – and that the absence of it invalidates the whole reselection procedure that followed. It's nice to have that element of 'natural justice' established. But I still have a couple of questions to ask. First, if this affront to natural justice was so obvious to Transport House's five-man inquiry team this January, why did no one – say the regional organiser – spot it earlier on? And, secondly, since it is a point that Ms Colquhoun herself has insisted on all along, is it really satisfactory that the kind of people prepared to brush it aside should still be in charge of Northampton North Labour Party?

☐ I don't know if I go all the way with John Paine this week (see p. 36) in his highly professional plea in mitigation for Judge McKinnon. Some of the things that the old buffer said in the course of his summing-up of the Kingsley Read case last Friday seem so out of place that, if I were Lord Chancellor, I think I would be bound to have some doubts about his general competence. But then, to let you into a secret, I have the same doubts about the Attorney-General. Will someone, perhaps even the luckless Sam Silkin himself, please tell me what on earth was wrong with simply charging Read under the Public Order Act – with using 'abusive or insulting words . . . whereby a breach of the peace is likely to be occasioned'? If any single statement could be said to do that, isn't it the phrase 'One down, a million to go'? And, since the 1965 Race Relations Act had already proved defective and anyway was out of date, wasn't that the obvious, sensible course for Sam Silkin to take?

☐ This was not his country and Said Hammani made no claim to be a prophet, but I can't think of a better example of a man receiving honour only when he was dead. Many newspaper readers must have been surprised to learn of his existence – the fact that we were hosts to one of the leading moderate influences on the Middle East having been generally ignored until too late. Nor does that, even after his murder, seem to be a matter of much interest to at least the popular newspapers. Last weekend's *Sunday Mirror* preferred to make the more dramatic charge that he had been an informer on terrorism for Scotland Yard, while producing about as little evidence for that claim as they had for an earlier speculation on the assassins of David Holden. Hammani's life, in fact, contradicted the confusion often (and, to some extent, understandably) made between the word 'Palestinian' and the word 'terrorist': the manner of his death may conceivably persuade other Palestinians, to say nothing of the rest of us, to be equally fastidious.

☐ Should January be regarded as 'the bad-tempered month'? I ask because in the past week or so I've witnessed two brawls on buses, one fight in the Underground – and I haven't yet been near a British Rail station. It's the buses, however, that seem to bring out the worst in people. A conductor going down Oxford Street nowadays really has to run the gauntlet, staving off marauders every time his bus stops whether at lights or simply in a traffic jam (if you held any idea about British queue-training communicating itself to foreigners, forget it: it works, especially among those battle-trained in the sales, the other way round.) Whether things will improve once that annual ritual is over I don't know. But, for the moment, I offer as my toast of the month London Transport's conductors and conductresses – for quite remarkable patience and forbearance in face of the enemy.

☐ I enjoyed the profile that Alexander MacLeod and Keith Hindell did of Donald Woods on BBC Radio 4 last Monday night – even if it did lean rather heavily (or, perhaps I should say, flatteringly) on the piece that his former colleague, Roger Omond, did about him in the NS a couple of months ago. Woods himself wrote some splendid pieces for us in 1976, including one ('Detainees on Death Row', NS 8 October 1976) that exposed the murderous record of the South African Special Branch long before its killing of Steve Biko. I've never actually met Woods, though one or two breezily irreverent telephone conversations we had together hardly suggested to me the image of the 'square', MCC-tie Conservative that he now seems anxious to project of himself. Still, I don't quarrel with that. I shall watch fascinated to see whether Mrs Thatcher, who so recently was all over Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, is equally warm in her embrace of Donald Woods.

☐ The other night I met a man who makes his living out of catching lobsters. He was a Scotsman so didn't take my congratulations on the wealth he must now have in very good part; nor was he altogether illuminating on why this particular shell-fish (unlike, say, prawns which remain remarkably good value) should in the past few years have gone through the ceiling in price. Instead all I got was a tale of woe about how if you laid 100 lobster pots you were lucky to find a third of them with anything in when you hauled them up. But he did have one piece of intriguing intelligence. Apparently, a competitor of his in Scotland has now started 'lobster farming' – putting a great tank or cage down in the sea and then tending the baby lobsters in it just as if they were trout. He was, I was relieved to hear, a former naval diver – else, who knows, after *Jaws* and *The Deep* we might soon be getting a new film called *Nips*.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

☐ However, some specialists took a different view. Mr Raymond Booth, honorary secretary of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said: 'I personally find this extremely bizarre. If donors knew that their sperm was going to lesbians, one can't help wondering if they would think this was a good thing.' – *Guardian* (Ruth Evans)

☐ Miss Joan White, a teacher at St Anselm's School, one of Britain's leading Roman Catholic comprehensives, said that she cared for the black children she taught. 'It didn't even enter my head that my standing as a Front candidate could involve my school or upset black children,' she added. – *Guardian* (N. B. Fergus)

☐ A flamingo called Pedro has been successfully fitted with an artificial leg made of plastic tubing at Banham Zoo near Norwich after breaking its own leg. The zoo manager, Herbert Dornbrack, said: 'I didn't have the heart to put Pedro down.' – *Sunday Times* (J. R. Soames)

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Jonathan Keates

Companions and Guides

The most embarrassing dinner party I ever attended was one at which everyone had either written, or was writing, a book. The hostess, clinking ice upstairs, had just finished the standard work on Hellenistic architecture, and her husband, meekly shredding salad and grinding the Moulinex, was a thinly-disguised authority on postwar France. They had a round dining-table, against which, as I should have remembered, Archdeacon Grantley warns Dr Arabin in *Barchester Towers* – 'never trust a man with a round dining-table.' No, indeed: têtes-à-tête are ruled out, seduction and intrigue are more or less impossible, and the person with the loudest voice presides.

Thus it was books from soup to nuts. A jolly, generous-looking girl announced the publication of her thesis on Melanie Klein. A sallow boy turned out to be writing the definitive biography of Madame de Staël. There was a military historian, a children's writer and her husband, the man with the loudest voice, who was a Dante scholar. Dreading the likelihood of being asked about my own book, I fenced with scraps of Klein recollected from teacher-training and mumbled obscurely about the *Purgatorio*. Sir Garnet Wolseley's campaign journals made a good standby, and I fancied steering everyone onto La Staël with the story about Napoleon's bath, the one that ends with her crying to the flunkey who has protested that the First Consul is splashing in the altogether, 'Out of my way! Genius has no sex!'.

It wasn't to be. The hostess, leaning towards me with a 'how interesting!' look pouched in her features like a baby kangaroo, said: 'And what are you working on?' The pause was universal: a round dining-table, you recall. 'Oh, just a . . . well, you know, a guidebook.' A guidebook! Nobody said 'Jesus!' but you could tell they all thought it from the way they rattled their forks and slurped up their Burgundy. I might have saved myself, I imagine, by telling them that it was a guide to Turkestan or the Kalahari, but a fatal penchant for truth forced me to admit that it was to Worcestershire, a county vaguely connected in most people's minds with sauce and cricket, and hence quite lacking in adventure or romance.

Afterwards, quietly gnashing my teeth along the Fulham Road, I wondered how the silly prats could have known what it means to write a guidebook. You crouch amid notes and papers, rising steadily in occupational layers like those midden heaps discovered in the ruins of millennial cities, and crack away at the Ordnance Survey sheets, trying to route tourists along roads made for legionaires, labourers and cows. Slowly you accumulate a colossal fund of vain and unspecialised knowledge – 'Pirton manor held from Queen Elizabeth for a pound of cummin and a pair of penny gloves. Grafton Woods the best fox-cover in the county, William Davys, rector of Preston, cited for incontinence with Mary Glubber, brown knapweed growing in St Margaret's churchyard' – dropping it into your text like an inexpert cook seasoning a stew, in the hope that somebody somewhere, may like it in the end.

Of all reference works guidebooks are nowadays among the most universally despised. Modern sightseeing has an inbuilt snobbery which won't acknowledge them as useful, though the hardened guidewriter often flatters his tourist's sense of personal discovery by leaving out an artistic or historical lollipop or two. What's more, demolition and redevelopment which knock down a country house or alter the character of a street, and financial pressures which close hotels or spike museums, all mean that any such work is mildly out of date as soon as it appears.

Yet the genre has its classics, modest-looking volumes produced by Baedeker and Murray during the last century; and nothing more perfectly embodies the sheer unclichéd romance of journeying than these dumpy little handbooks with their gold-stamped crimson covers, folding maps and sometimes, among the pages, a pressed leaf or a gallery ticket.

Here we find the world of couriers, *diligences*, *valets-de-places*, English chemists, 'reliable wet nurses' and 'really clean Breton maids', where travellers are recommended to take Keatings' Powder for use in verminous inns, told to provide themselves with everything from a rubber bath and a sun helmet to Dr Locock's pills and Henry's magnesia, and instructed on how to deal with natives in sections such as Baedeker's enigmatically-labelled 'Intercourse with Orientals' or Murray's *verb. sap.* on Spanish brigands:

> A frank, good-humoured surrender, presence of mind, and a calm, courteous appeal to them as *Caballeros* seldom fails to conciliate the 'gentlemen' and to chloroform the discomfort of the operation.

Richard Ford, contributor of that advice, offers a suitably idiosyncratic phrase-list, most of it to do with women: 'What a pretty girl! I do it for your sake. You are a pretty jewel. She is an old maid. Ah, you are joking with me. Conchita has a wicked tongue.' J. M. Neal, Tracatarian hymnodist, author of Murray's *Portugal*, its wonderful bursts of landscape description alternating with peevish snaps at flea-ridden inn beds, spends much time in the stable:

> Where is my whip? Lengthen the stirrups. One hole, two, another. That will do. Don't beat him. If you do it again I shall complain to your master. This horse is lazy – a jibber – kicks – shies – stumbles. He has a sand-crack. He is unsound in the fetlock.

Baedeker is still more or less reliable, tumid with history, time and measurement, dizzy with names, yet never repetitive and sometimes, in a quietly bumbling way, almost rhapsodic, as in his 'Excursion to Montenegro' in the 1900 *Austria*:

> At places the traveller encounters quite a Homeric state of society, where war and poetry are the sole pursuits, and where the hero is seen seated in the presence of the minstrel, who extols his exploits in war to the twang of the one-stringed 'gusla'.

What other book, after all, could so nonchalantly have taught me that Leibnitz offered Louis XIV a plan for a Suez Canal in 1671, or the Serbo-Croat word (*krumbiri*) for potatoes?

More important than their shameless eagerness to be informative and readable is their reflection, in an age when you did not even have to be very rich to travel very far, of certain qualities that the modern cicerone, faced with Holiday Inns and airport lounges, can never hope to convey. Their ideal traveller, pegging along in his *diligence* or on top of his jibbing nag, is alert, enthusiastic, respectful without servility, ready to lie down one night on a bug-swarming palliasse, the next between monogrammed sheets, someone in whom *ennui* is easily overtaken by curiosity, laughter and surprise, someone above all patient and interested.

What I fear I could never have explained to the Fulham diners was that I actually wanted to write my book because of all this, not with any but the slightest idea of emulating Murray and Baedeker, but because their tradition appealed and inspired. The principle of all guidebooks, and it may be, of all travel, is enshrined in Neal's comment following his prolonged account of northern Portuguese monasticism: 'This disgression on the Cistercians will serve to occupy the time while the horses are baiting.'

Roger Woddis

Enter Will

The Peking Library has admitted to its shelves several foreign authors, including Shakespeare.

The Bard and the banner
Do not go together;
The Bard darkens to mystery,
The banner stands out clear;
The hammer and the sickle
Defy the winter weather;
The dragon belches fire,
The Swan admits to fear.
Slogans spell it out,
Sonnets whisper doubt,
Youth advances, age retreats;
Peasants point the way,
Poems have feet of clay;
The heart avoids the crowded streets.
Labour is collective,
Love needs no directive;
One is weak, the many strong.
The banner never errs;
The Bard at times prefers
The comedy of being wrong.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Heads and Tails

In all my 34 years as a chubby, happy schoolboy and ditto schoolmaster, I was only, alas, on the receiving end of three headmasters. I say this regretfully because I always found them to be such agreeable, merry, easy fellows – successful, you see, and a little bit of success never did anybody's character much harm. It was the ambitious, failed, 'short-listed, but . . .' senior masters who had tried to blossom out who could be a bother and needed watching.

The first headmaster I experienced was my prep school one, a rosy-faced and deaf Scot with a passion for theatricals who taught us English in a haze of Haig and had the wildly rolling gait of a jolly jack tar who, in addition to finding his sea-legs, has also found where they keep the rum. His presence could be alarming but his punishments were negligible. For 'talking after lights-out', which ranked strangely high as a crime, we were inserted by the night porter into our dressing-gowns and sent down to the headmaster's study and there made to kneel facing a wall. Whisky smells had now been fortified, not unpleasantly, by those of port. Silence fell, save for the scratching of his pen as he wrote letters to parents ('Matron reports a sharp improvement in Gerald's enuresis. The tide has turned!'). After ten minutes or so of this weird but undemanding vigil we were told to stand up, were usually each given a particularly succulent kind of chocolate biscuit (disaster for our Pepsodent-fresh teeth, but who cared?) and were then returned to bed. The little expedition had been well worth it. Hard cheese on the goody-goodies who'd dutifully shut up at lights-out.

My second headmaster, to whom I was both pupil and, later, a colleague was Dr Kenneth Fisher (no relation of that scholastically fertile Archbishop), previously a stinks master at Clifton and Eton. He too was pleasingly rubicund and looked as though he had recently consumed a sizeable portion of steak and kidney pudding, which indeed he very often had. Geniality itself, and irascible only in short bursts, he did not, like Queen Elizabeth I, greatly enjoy having to make firm decisions. If faced with these out of doors, he had a ready means of escape. A keen ornithologist (father of the distinguished James Fisher), he would appear to be listening intently to a knotty problem presented to him by some anxious master. It is true that he was listening, but not always to the problem. His ear had caught the melodious tones of the chiff-chaff or the nuthatch or the fieldfare or whatever and with a happy cry of 'Sh!! Did you hear it?' he was off, gown flying out behind, darting away into the shrubs. My third headmaster was blessed, among many other virtues, with a sense of humour so acute that he frequently had, for business reasons, to suppress it. The best jokes, and they proliferated, in his end-of-term speeches were spontaneously applauded by the boys as in a music-hall. This is very rare. I am deeply grateful to these three excellent men. And they all had, apart from anything else, charm.

I have ventured again on the subject of school matters because the enormous volume of correspondence which followed my mention of Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's admirable *The Public School Phenomenon* has shown that readers in general, whether educated there or not, find the details of such establishments endlessly interesting and I can now bring forward for inspection yet another treat, Dr J. R. de S. Honey's splendidly researched survey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, published by Millington Books at £5.95.

Professor Honey, concentrating on the development of the public school in the 19th century, has unearthed countless fascinating facts. Had you, for example, ever realised that Delius composed his very first song in the sanatorium of the International College at Isleworth after being heavily conked on the head by a cricket stump during the rebellion of 1879? Headmasters had good reason to be rebellion-conscious: members of the staff had been overpowered at the Leys and order was only restored by mounted police, the *Marseillaise* had been defiantly sung at King's School, Canterbury, and preparations made for a lengthy siege (the headmaster speedily snapped up an overseas bishopric), while at Eton there had been a spirited attempt to blow up a boarding-house with gunpowder. Small wonder, then, that at Wellington in 1859, when a group of boys, deceived by bright moonlight into thinking that dawn had broken, got up and dressed, the headmaster's first thought, as he prudently locked his bedroom door, was that an uprising of another sort was taking place.

Not that, by and large, 19th-century headmasters were incapable of dealing with indiscipline. Seldom elsewhere have such powerful autocrats existed, mostly furnished with an egomania and eccentricity that continued into the next century (there was the famous Shrewsbury headmaster who absent-mindedly greeted, in 1919, a visiting old boy with 'Let's see now, was it you or your brother who was killed in the war?'). They ruled by fright and the cane, the dog-collars that most of them sported seeming to imply that God too had a share in the punishment ('Give him one from Me'). We do not normally in this wholesome column cater for those with sexual aberrations but here is a little feast for sadists. The supremely evil-conscious Arnold whacked diligently away (18 strokes could be expected for lying), while a headmaster of St Bees used to start off a lesson with a stroke of the cane all round to warm things up. The record seems to have been held by Moss of Shrewsbury who notched up a flogging of 88 strokes, settling down on his subsequent retirement in the Herefordshire village of Much Birch. The terrifying Warre, ominous name, of Eton used a flogging-block, only too reminiscent of a beheading, and employed two 'holders-down' to render the victim immobile and, what was worse, wound up the proceedings with a long moral lecture. Benson of Wellington, of whom every fresh detail paints an ever fishier picture, clearly loved his work ('It was a treat to see the zealous satisfaction with which he chastised').

And what, meanwhile, was being taught and learnt? The Classics, of course. At Charterhouse, even as late as 1899, only 13 per cent of the school was excused Greek. The Classics were considered the only fit subject for gentlemen, and some forgetfully assumed that they were known to all. Sir John Anderson began a speech in the Commons with 'As Horace has it . . .' (ribald screams from the Labour benches of 'Good old 'Orace!'), while the headmaster of Charterhouse, addressing a gathering of local villagers, started with the words 'If you open your Euripedes . . .'. Other subjects got the shortest of shrifts. The attitude to French and to the scared frogs who were imported to teach it is well illustrated by the contemptuous way in which Churchill chose to murder it. At some schools, maths masters could neither wear gowns nor administer discipline (such a one spent, at Radley, a whole teaching period crouching beneath a desk). A scientist was considered to be 'a sort of mechanic', good English was expected to emerge as a by-product of the Classics, and a knowledge of geography was thought to be quite unnecessary (a distinguished product of Rossall, appointed to the bishopric of Rangoon, started eagerly looking for this outlandish spot in a map of Africa). The attitude towards effeminate subjects such as music and art was entirely philistine (their teachers were, as a matter of course, barred from the Masters' Common Room).

How humdrum by comparison our modern public schools appear to be. At Glenalmond in 1860, the German master and a future bishop fought a duel. One morning at Manchester Grammar School, nine of the staff were briskly sacked for disloyalty. At Rugby they threw fire-crackers down the headmaster's chimney during a dinner-party. Canon Dawson, brought in to rescue the fortunes of Brighton College, imported a large contingent of hot-blooded foreigners (two years' fees in advance) though, as he explained, there were difficulties: 'They're all highly sexed, and it's only a matter of months before they sleep with a housemaid. Then out they go.' At Westminster there was, until 1900, no hot water at all (none to wash in, that is), at Radley the ink froze solid, and at last we know the truth about the playing-fields of Eton. Upon them there were, in pre-footer days, ceaseless brawls and fisticuffs (at least one boy got killed) and hand-to-hand fighting and struggles – ideal training for the real thing, as it might be Waterloo.

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Letters to the Editor

In Begin's Court

Sir, May I suggest that 'it is time' Michael Adams (Letters 6 January) and his friends 'started thinking for themselves'? It is difficult to believe that anyone can take seriously the distortions of his reconstruction of events in the Middle East over the past 30 years.

Before 15 May, 1948, the end of the British Mandate, many Palestinian Arabs had left their homes, some of them persuaded to do so by their leaders as a prelude to an all-out attack on the Jews of the country, others under the pressure of mass hysteria and lack of confidence in the ability of Arab forces to defend them.

Living there at that time, I saw with my own eyes troops of the Arab Legion, then under British senior officers, massing on the west bank of the Jordan on the way up to Jerusalem, ready to pounce upon the city and its Jewish citizens the moment the British withdrew. So confident of victory were the Arab armies in 1948 that King Farouk of Egypt, for instance, went so far as to issue a special postage stamp depicting himself at the head of his victorious army invading Palestine. In fact the Egyptians never advanced further than Gaza and the outskirts of Bethlehem, where they were not very popular with the Palestinians.

Nine years later, in 1967, is it surprising that Israel was fully prepared to resist the carefully planned provocation of Nasser and the other neighbouring Arab leaders? The results are well known, but in warfare, ancient or modern, the unsuccessful and their friends must not complain about the 'meticulous' planning or the 'brutally executed' campaign forced upon the victors. Wars cannot be won any other way.

Finally, to suggest that the so-called 1973 campaign, launched by Egypt during the holy fast of Ramadan and on the most solemn day of the Jewish year, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), when it could be safely assumed that the vast majority of the Israeli population would be in their synagogues, was justified by the failure of 'all peaceful means' is a travesty of the truth.

But to the present and the future! Let us hope that the prospects of peace now on the horizon as a result of the initiatives of President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin will not be frustrated by recriminations relating to the past nor sullied by past memories best forgotten. It is stupid to suggest that the faults are ever all on one side. Rather should we all support in any way open to us the efforts now in train to achieve at last a just and durable peace between Israel and her Arab neighbours.

C. WITTON-DAVIES

Archdeacon's Lodging
Christ Church
Oxford

Sir, Although Michael Adams (Letters 6 January) appears to dislike propagandists, his 'reply' to my letter (drawing attention to the dangers to Israel of not having defensible borders in the light of what has happened in the past) was, in its denial that Israel had been victim of four aggressive wars, chock-a-block with the sort of re-writing of history and sweeping statements that are the hallmark of the true propagandists.

As regards his first point. The assertion that Egypt and Transjordan only intervened in Palestine in May 1948 skilfully avoids reference to what other Arab countries were already doing. Just two illustrations from among many in the British press: 'An Arab force estimated at 600 to 800 strong yesterday attacked Jewish settlements from Syria' (*The Times,* 10 January 1948); 'An Arab band of more than 300 infiltrated across the Jordan . . . 6,000 Arab volunteers have now crossed into Palestine, most of them Iraqis and Syrians' (*Daily Telegraph,* 11 February 1948). Egypt cannot be accused of entering, overtly or covertly, Palestine prior to 15 May 1948. Certainly, however, she was guided by a desire to share the spoils in the belief, fortunately mistaken, that the comparatively unarmed 650,000 Jews of Israel were no match for the combined armies of seven Arab countries. And as to the refugees, authoritative Arabs did not, at the time, hide their responsibility: 'The fact that there are these refugees is the direct consequence of the action of the Arab States in opposing partition and the Jewish State': (Emil Ghoury, Secretary of the Arab High Committee, the *Beirut Daily Telegraph,* 6 September 1948).

As regards Mr Adams's third point, Israel's 'provocation' of Nasser in June 1967, the following from *The Times* speaks for itself: 'He (President Nasser) warned that the sealing of the Gulf of Aquaba means possible war with Israel . . . The battle with Israel will not be limited to the Syrian and Egyptian fronts but will be a whole-hearted battle to destroy Israel' (27 May 1967).

Similar threats and actions were made by Nasser in 1956, which takes care of Mr Adams's second point (i.e. the Israeli attack in 1956 on Egyptian forces at Sharm el Sheikh and elsewhere in Sinai).

Lastly, the 1973 attack was launched against Israel because Egypt and Syria did not wish to implement UN Resolution 242 (which entailed the recognition of Israel). Since 1967 all Israeli offers (including, for instance, one in 1971 by General Dayan for an initial 20-mile withdrawal to the passes east of the Canal) and proposals for talks, direct or indirect, had been rejected: all this is on record.

PAUL LAX

20 Park Hill Road
Shortlands
Bromley, Kent

Noise from Hastings

Sir, I was surprised and not a little saddened to find that a paper of your distinction should have stooped so low as to publish such a venomous and unprincipled attack on the Hastings Chess Congress and its organisation. I refer to the article that appeared under the name of Tony Miles in your issue of 6 January.

We in the chess world are accustomed to seeing such perversions of the truth appearing in the gutter press, chess-players and chess organisers being fair game inasmuch as they belong to a minority of the country's population and, what is worse, to an intellectual minority. But, as I think you yourself must have realised, we are a minority that has grown to a large minority over recent years. I wonder if you realise how many of them, like myself, will no longer buy or read the NEW STATESMAN as a direct consequence of this article which, presumably, has had your editorial blessing?

I am, too, astonished that you did not find the tone of the article over-pitched and exaggerated in its constant and universal denigration of the Hastings Chess Congress. To consider the main point: the statement that 'Hastings is preserved only by players from the Eastern bloc' (there is a deft use of the political motif here and I can see a great future for the grandmaster as a political agitator). If you examine the current rating list of the world's grandmasters you will find that 87 (62 per cent) comes from the Eastern Bloc, 27 (19 per cent) from the Americas, 3 (2 per cent) from the Near East, and 24 (17 per cent) from Western Europe. It is therefore natural that the majority of competing grandmasters at Hastings should come from the Eastern Bloc. Furthermore, of the 24 from Western Europe no less than 22 have played at Hastings and the vast majority would be very glad to come again.

As regards noise, the Hastings event compares well with other major events, being marginally inferior to those in Switzerland and Holland and much superior to those in Yugoslavia and Spain. As regards traditionally foul weather, the sun is at the moment almost blazing through my window at the Yelton Hotel, which is next door to the White Rock Pavilion where the tournament is played. In any case I would remind the grandmaster that England is in the Northern Hemisphere and that the tournament is held in the middle of winter. This trouble could be solved by playing the event in summer or transporting it to the Balearic Isles.

HARRY GOLOMBEK

Albion Crescent
Chalfont St Giles
Bucks.

Social Democratic Dilemmas

Sir, 'The British worker likes Callaghan's plain speaking style. Does that make either him or Callaghan Conservative? The answer is that the Conservatives themselves certainly see Callaghan as a brilliant exponent of conservative values' (NS 23 & 30 December). No, James Fenton, that is *not* the answer. It is begging the question, and you have just let a jumbo flying saucer escape out of your peripheral vision. Many of us feel sick when we see Labour governments supporting income differentials, indirect taxation and public spending cuts – not to mention the Vietnam war and arms sales to South Africa. But if a Labour government seriously tried to transform Britain into a socialist country, would the party ever gain office again? Which is more important, to have a Labour Party we can be proud of, or to have one which can spare us from Conservative government from time to time?

Perhaps we can still hope for both, but there *is* more difference between socialism and democratic socialism than between omelettes and omelettes made from eggs. Undemocratic socialism means state ownership, small income differences, more buses than cars and – well, the NS has reasonable East European coverage. Suppose the people don't want socialism? Are they all brainwashed by the media? Can they be left to make up their own minds? The leaders of the 'awkward squad' are placed in a difficult position, and if six years of this dilemma have frayed Anthony Howard's nerves, then he has my sympathy.

NICK GALWEY

Ciat
Cali
Colombia

In Warner's Defence

Sir, Dr Cunningham's review of my *Francis Warner: Poet and Dramatist* (NS 2 December) begins with a category mistake, proceeds to judge it by criteria that are inappropriate to a scholarly work, and ends after numerous mistakes of fact with a misprint (at least I hope it is; his dictionary would tell him that there is no such fish as a 'wasse').

Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor *et al.* do not appear because, as the book was not intended to be the coffee-table pop-publicity Cunningham was looking for, they were not invited. 'Disappointment' does indeed 'await', as he grinningly puts it; the book is a careful and serious work. Cunningham misquotes the

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Preface (and in so doing misses the point of the book). He writes: 'Prentki's volume, though, is not just celebration, it's publicity – aimed at reaping "new audiences of his plays and new readers of his poetry".' It is not. The relevant sentence in the Preface reads: 'It is hoped that this collection of essays will go some way towards preparing new readers of his poetry and new audiences of his plays *for an understanding of his achievement.*' So Cunningham's confusion of scholarship with publicity continues throughout the piece.

A sample of his mistakes:

(1) The 'gerontic (*sic*) ex-theatre critic' he refrained from naming lest it should spoil his point about there being only one 'famous name' is Sir Harold Hobson! The same insults were thrown at him when he championed the plays of Samuel Beckett and of Harold Pinter. He will not mind. What Cunningham did not mention was that one of the more distinguished younger theatre-critics also contributed, coming to the same conclusions as Sir Harold from an entirely different angle. Both of these drama critics have seen all the plays in performance. I happen to know Cunningham has seen none. Indeed, the very accusations levelled against Mr Warner's plays by Cunningham ('extreme nastiness . . . direst brothel-fantasy . . .' etc) were used in the NEW STATESMAN by F. L. Lucas against Eliot's *The Waste Land* (3 November 1923): 'We are thrust into the squalid unreal Inferno of London Bridge . . . this unhappy composition should have been left to sink . . .'

(2) At no point did the lexicographer suggest what Cunningham says he did – that recurrence of quotations in the *OED* 'maketh poet' (what a vile tea-shoppe style your critic has!). The title of his essay, to go no further, makes it clear that he is writing on Warner's contribution to the English language, not on what makes him a poet.

(3) There was no contribution from a landscape gardener. Our leading authority on the relationship between poetry and the landscape in which it is written, did write a fine essay. But Cunningham knows neither the field, nor a scholar from a gardener.

(4) The professor who wrote on Warner's poetry is not 'a refugee professor', but the senior Professor of English Literature at the American University of Beirut.

(5) Cunningham's 'feeble girl or two' boils down to a senior academic, the Assistant Professor in English Literature at the University of Umeå, Sweden, one of the most highly-trained members of the staff of the *OED* and a *Times* feature-writer,

Perhaps your readers should know that Cunningham is one of Mr Warner's younger colleagues. Being new, he does not yet know that since 1960 most of the major scholars in the field of literary Platonism have acknowledged their debt to Mr Warner's learning and advice. He could also read Mr Warner's work on Samuel Beckett's debt to modern painting . . .

TIM PRENTKI

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Oxford

Untranscribability

Sir, Readers of Peter Conrad's shrill invection against my book, *The Modes of Modern Writing*, will have made their own assessment of his capacity for discriminating judgment, and may decide for themselves whether, as a practising novelist as well as a critic and teacher, I am likely to harbour the 'aggressive dislike of literature' which he attributes to me. His gross misrepresentation of my book in matters of fact, however, should not be left unchallenged.

The words he quotes from my Preface as illustrating my 'conversion' to structuralism in *The Modes of Modern Writing* are in fact descriptions of a much earlier book, *Language of Fiction* (1966), which was, as I state, quite uninfluenced by structuralism. It is not true that I 'favour' radically experimental modernist texts and despise realistic, readerly ones: the declared purpose of my book is to propose a method of critical analysis that does not entail favouring one kind of modern writing at the expense of another. The dogmatic rejection of realism by the French *nouvelle critique*, to which I am alleged to have 'capitulated', is the very issue on which I express my disagreement with it most emphatically. Mr Conrad says that I do not distinguish between literary and non-literary discourse and that I try to demonstrate the literariness of *Guardian* articles and a desk encyclopaedia. Precisely the opposite is the case. I could go on. 'Things have come to a pretty pass' indeed, when something like this passes for a review.

DAVID LODGE

Department of English Language and Literature
University of Birmingham

Not Necessarily Damned

Sir, Tim Albert's article on the Sutton Centre (NS 6 January) was disturbing, not only because of his report of the flat-footed and uninformed attack on the way the centre is run, but because of the suggestion running through the article that, as a result of this attack, the whole venture was in danger of crumbling. This must surely have been a misreading of a very temporary reaction. I have come to know the Sutton Centre, as an outsider, fairly well, and I cannot see that healthy structure, so skilfully and enthusiastically built up by staff, parents and kids, disintegrating so easily. Nor in fact I can see intelligent Conservatives allowing it to happen. The structure is solid, and I'm sure that everyone responsible for the well-being of the centre is actually looking forward to the Inspectors' call. Furthermore, I'm confident that H.M.I. will be as impressed as the many other visitors, official and unofficial, who have come and seen and been conquered by the detailed achievements and by the air of efficiency and hopefulness which pervades the place. It is one of the major educational institutions in this country which today can be seen as a powerful force for common sense and enlightenment, pointing the way forward for community education and recreation.

HARRY A. RÉE

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London N10

Sindrone

Sir, In his review of *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (NS 2 December) John Sturrock suggests that the Lolita syndrome is 'a whim of Martin Seymour-Smith's'. Not so: the phrase has been in general currency since at least 1960, when a book by Simone de Beauvoir was published in English as *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome*; and Martin Seymour-Smith wrote the entry at my request.

John Sturrock is equally wide of the mark in his reference to the *Dictionary* as being 'stiff with the names of those individuals deemed by the editors to have helped in the moulding of the modern mind'. As the Preface makes clear, the names included are simply those of individuals mentioned in the body of the work – in effect, an old-fashioned index of names, with the unusual (and, it was hoped, helpful) features of giving dates and brief descriptions, of being incorporated in the main alphabetical sequence, and of referring to headings instead of to page-numbers. Naturally, this all takes space – to be precise, 7 per cent of the total – but the 'specimen page' chosen 'at random' by Mr Sturrock for (inaccurate) statistical analysis is as grotesquely untypical as he could have found, even in W, a letter conspicuously rich in surnames and thin in relevant terms.

OLIVER STALLYBRASS
Co-editor, The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought

106 Westwood Hill
London SE26

Female Complaint

Sir, I would like to support Patricia Romero in her observation (Letters, 6 January) that the NEW STATESMAN is seriously lacking women reviewers. As a STATESMAN reader I feel unenlightened as to what my female contempories think about the literary scene. I believe women are different from men, I also believe they are as important, but I begin to wonder if this paper does?

NELL DUNN

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London SW6

Bright Light

Sir, Do I detect a faint whiff of male chauvinism in Stephen Koss's review of *Lady Unknown*, the life of Angela Burdett-Coutts by Edna Healey (NS 6 January)?

Perhaps he was unconscious of this in his allusion to Angela's marriage to a man half her age when she was in her 68th year. If she had been *Andrew* Burdett-Coutts, philanthropist, contemplating marriage with a 34-year-old woman, would Mr Koss have made such a meal of the fact or of the light in the church 'being very dim indeed' to warrant Mrs Healey's description of Angela at the ceremony as 'a slender figure in white velvet . . . a snow maiden, ageless and immaculate'?

I can't recollect requiring a dimly shaded office when I re-married in my 65th year, only a little younger than Angela. In fact, the sun shone brightly and I wouldn't be surprised if it shone as brightly on Angela when she came out of the church to face the press, knowing she had nothing to fear. After all, her marriage to the young man lasted 27 years!

MURIEL V. GARDINER

Mote End
Nan Clark's Lane
London NW7

Is This True?

Sir, With the deepest regret I must inform James Fenton that the 'little purses of chocolate sovereigns' he mentions (NS 23 & 30 December) so long the quintessence of the English Christmas morning are no longer available due to a recent EEC directive concerned with no less weighty a subject than the importation of Yugoslav chocolates.

J. KILNER

18 Delph Mount
Leeds

Ellen Wilkinson

Sir, I am collecting material to write a life of Ellen Wilkinson. If any of your readers have memories and experiences which they would share, or documents and photos which they would loan, I would gratefully treat all with care, and (where necessary) return after careful handling.

BETTY VERNON

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Belmont, Sutton
Surrey

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

A. J. P. Taylor

Christ Stopped At Potsdam

Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State by DANIEL YERGIN *Houghton Mifflin* $15

In September 1945 Senator Claude Pepper called at the Kremlin. Stalin remarked to him that the 'Grand Alliance' had been created by the single circumstance of a common enemy. Stalin went on:

> That tie no longer exists and we shall have to find a new basis for our close relations in the future. That will not be easy but Christ said, 'Seek and ye shall find'.

Stalin's biblical injunction came too late. It had been followed at Yalta with outstanding success. At Potsdam the Americans began to abandon it and from Potsdam the path ran with occasional interruptions to the Berlin blockade, which marked the confirmation and also the limitations of the cold war.

This interpretation is not new, but Daniel Yergin draws on more sources than any previous writer. In his view US policy was shaped by two rival axioms concerning the USSR. The Riga axioms were held by nearly all US diplomats before the second world war. These axioms were simple: Soviet Russia was dedicated to world revolution and would promote it by military force. The Yalta axioms were held by Roosevelt and a few associates: the USSR was a world power concerned with security and the US could do business with it. Roosevelt's death took the drive out of the Yalta axioms and the end of the war seemed to make them less necessary. Moreover Truman, unlike Roosevelt, liked quick, clear-cut solutions. Henry Wallace remarked, 'Truman's decisiveness is admirable. The only question is as to whether he has information behind his decisiveness to enable his decisions to stand up.'

Truman certainly received plenty of information. It ran all one way: a revival of the Riga axioms. It was expressed by George Kennan in his 'Long Dispatch', the longest document in the records of the State Department. It culminated in document NSC-68, drafted in 1950.

> The Kremlin is inescapably militant. It is inescapably militant because it possesses and is possessed by a world-wide revolutionary movement, because it is the inheritor of Russian imperialism and because it is a totalitarian dictatorship.

The USSR's 'fundamental design' necessitated the destruction of the US and thus the US was 'mortally challenged' by the USSR. These axioms were dogma and rested on no evidence. Indeed all the evidence runs the other way. In the immediate post-war years Stalin deliberately thwarted the advance of the communist parties in France and Italy. His concern in the USSR's border states was security, not the advance of communism. His supposedly aggressive designs, as in Iran or at the Straits, also sprang from security and he abandoned them when they were resisted. Throughout these years, the USSR was a frightened power desperately on the defensive. Apart from security, Stalin's other main aim was to gather reparations from Germany, an aim which curiously led him to champion German unity when the Western allies had already abandoned it.

These objections are irrelevant. US policy was pursuing a dogma rather than responding to events. Byrnes remarked at Potsdam:

> Someone made an awful mistake in bringing about a situation where Russia was permitted to come out of a war with the power she will have . . . The German people under a democracy would have been a far superior ally than Russia.

Truman was not yet convinced: 'I like Stalin. Stalin is as near Tom Pendergast [the Missouri political boss] as any man I know. He is very fond of classical music.'

But when Byrnes, as secretary of state, switched round and actually negotiated with the Russians, Truman lost patience. 'Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making . . . I'm tired of babying the Soviets.' By 1946 the Americans lost interest in bargaining and conducted negotiations publicly in order to appeal to 'world opinion', or in more practical terms to whip up US anti-communism. Yergin rather neglects this aspect and writes as though US policy was made only by diplomats. Surely there was a wider pressure from those who disliked the USSR's socialism. The concrete needs of US imperialism should be added. The conflict over Iran, for instance, had nothing to do with stemming communism or even with checking Soviet power. The Americans were after Iran's oil and were more concerned to exclude the British, now their humble client, than to thwart their Soviet enemy.

At this stage the Riga axioms took on a more positive form. Originally they had merely followed the negative line of disregarding the USSR. Now they demanded positive action in the name of national security. Any step taken by Russia beyond its borders in the name of Soviet 'security' would by definition clash with what became known as American 'national security'. As Kennan postulated, 'We must make the Russians understand that they must confine their security demands to our concept of security demands.' Another 'expert' pronounced: 'The basic objective of the USSR appears to be a limitless expansion of Soviet Communism accompanied by a considerable territorial expansion of Russian imperialism.' Yet throughout the period, and indeed to the present day, there has been no expansion of Soviet Communism and no territorial expansion of Russian imperialism. As against this, American expansion has not been far from limitless, as witness Greece and Turkey, or where it has been limited this came from military defeat, as in Vietnam, and not from modesty.

Nuclear power was a complicating factor. At first it gave the Americans an illusion of complete superiority. Then they discovered that it could not be used as a bargaining weapon. And in the end it has restrained the Americans more than it has restrained the USSR or any lesser power. As Yergin points out, the Americans were frightened by their own success. Moreover the armed forces justified their ever-increasing demands by inflated and often deliberately false estimates of Soviet strength and then were terrified by their own estimates. Here is another factor that Yergin hardly considers. Expenditure on armaments stimulated the US economy and continues to do so. If peace broke out, the US would be in desperate straits. Fortunately for American capitalism, imaginary fears once started can rarely be dispelled: they are absorbed into the system and run on happily of themselves.

The immediate post-war period moved gradually to a climax in 1947 and 1948. The first catalysis was the economic crisis in western Europe. The Marshall Plan aimed both to stabilise Western capitalism and to draw a clear line against any communist advance. For the first time the iron curtain became official US policy. Capitalism was duly saved; communism was duly checked in the West. But there was a corollary. The Soviets also consolidated their security in Eastern Europe. Non-communist Hungary and a little later non-communist Czechoslovakia were victims of the Marshall Plan. When the State Department considered censuring the USSR at the Security Council, one official objected, 'The Soviets might level counter charges against us as concerning MacArthur's actions in Japan'. No appeal was made to the Security Council.

The decisive step came in 1948 when the US and Britain set up a separate state in western Germany. Most of the troubles in the four-power control commission had come from France. But France had to be swept into the new policy and Soviet Russia got all the blame for obstruction. In fact the USSR needed German unity in order to exact reparations from the western zones – no doubt one reason why the US and Britain abandoned unity. The Russians inaugurated the blockade of Berlin in defence of German unity, believing that it would force the western powers to the conference table. Instead the Anglo-Americans successfully ran the air lift. War seemed near but faced with nuclear war or nothing the US chose no war. Yergin reveals a curious fact in a footnote – the B-29s, sent to England and pointedly known as 'atomic bombers', had not been modified to carry atomic bombs. Probably the Russians knew this all along. The Berlin blockade duly ended at the conference table, though German unity fortunately was not preserved.

There has been no serious danger of war in Europe since 1948. The Americans have fought what would once have been called colonial wars. There was a false alarm in

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1962 over Cuba when the Americans got the appearance of victory and the Soviets got what they wanted – the independence of Cuba. Now both Eastern and Western blocs are losing their rigidity. Nuclear weapons are no longer the monopoly of the two superpowers. The rise of communist China has upset the calculations of both the US and the USSR. The phrases of the cold war are used now more by academic pundits than by diplomats. Détente is talked about and even occasionally practised. The two superpowers have not changed their characters. But maybe they are coming to recognise that bargaining is a better way of advancing their own security. As Yergin concludes,

> This means a return to the Yalta axioms as the basic mode of dealing with the Soviet world, and perhaps a vindication for Franklin Roosevelt and his aims and methods.

Yergin may err on the optimistic side, but there seems just a chance that Christ did not stop at Potsdam after all.

Martin Amis

No Satisfaction

The Professor of Desire by PHILIP ROTH
Farrar Straus and Giroux $8.95

Philip Roth's nine novels arrange themselves in trilogies – or they do if you nudge them. To begin with we have the three apprentice works: *Goodbye, Columbus* and *Letting Go*, which survey the waking novelist's immediate experience, and *When She Was Good*, which steps self-consciously outside it. Next we have that lip-smacking threesome of frisky Menippean satires, *Our Gang, The Breast* and *The Great American Novel*, where Roth took a manic holiday from his normally sober preoccupations – namely, Jewish family life, heartbreak in the Humanities, and the impossibility of getting on with women. Flanking the satires are *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) and *My Life as a Man* (1974), obsessively personal accounts of emotional failure and collapse, and now along comes *The Professor of Desire* to round off the trio. Like its weepy, ball-broken hero, David Kepesh, the novel is an oddly helpless, melancholy and apathetic conclusion to Roth's protracted self-scrutiny; having long been adept at turning his life into literature, Roth here lets life just wash all over him. The new persona is the prostrate man, limping from psychiatrist's couch to psychiatrist's couch, from bed to bed, and from bad to worse.

Roth's women. There are three kinds of them, too, and each novel in the trilogy gives emphasis to a different type (I think we had better call it the 'My Life' trilogy. But stay, gentile reader: mere Jewishness is seen as ever less central to the Roth predicament, and is given only incidental treatment here). The first kind of girl is the Girl Who Will Do Anything. And not many girls, it seems, will Do that. *Portnoy's Complaint* inspected this type most closely, in the person of The Monkey, the hero's reckless companion, and also, even more enjoyably, through comic fantasy – the world of swinish, gloating sexuality opened up by Thereal McCoy, Portnoy's dirty-talking, cupcake-nippled phantasm. She reappears as Sharon Shatsky in *My Life as a Man* and, in the present book, as Birgitta, a daring and predatory Scandinavian with whom Kepesh has a tremulous European jaunt. The good thing about these girls, apparently, is that you can do whatever the hell you like to them in bed. The bad thing is that you wish they wouldn't let you. While the girls are unfrightened by their own waywardness, the Roth man always is – in the end, anyway. There is something deeply unladylike, also, in the ease with which they get on with their own desires.

The Roth man is not as frightened of the first type of Roth woman as he is of the second type of Roth woman, whom he nonetheless tends to marry. This type is the Ball-Breaker, and her starkest representative in the trilogy is Maureen in *My Life as a Man* (her prototype, though one brilliantly transposed in social context, was Lucy in *When She Was Good*). The Ball-Breaker's mission is to ensnare, flatten and stomp on the Roth man; when she has got him impotent, enervated and wondering if he is a homosexual, she has got him where she wants him. The Ball-Breaker makes a cleverly varied guest-appearance in *The Professor of Desire* as Helen Kepesh, where added stress is given to her vanity, aimlessness, alcoholism, her grandiose fantasies and her wasted intelligence and beauty. You have to look rather harder for the Ball-Breaker in *Portnoy*. The Monkey is a handful all right, but she lacks the Ball-Breaker's destructive energy and deluded self-belief. Who is it, then, who stands over the hero with a knife, who lets him glimpse her menstrual blood, who in some sense 'marries' him with ineluctably horrendous results? Why, Sophie Portnoy, the Jewish Mother – whose hips, Portnoy can't help noticing, even towards the end of the novel, 'aren't bad . . . '

The third type of Roth woman does not scare the Roth man. Instead, she is scared by him. She is the tender realist, methodical, protective, self-abnegating. She is not a Dickensian Little Woman; on the contrary, she is a Big Woman, with a determined if precarious working relationship with reality. Despite her past bruises and hurts, she sees things the way things really are, and longs to rescue the Roth man for the sane world: she is, above all, *unpsychotic*. The Pumpkin and The Pilgrim shared the role of the Big Woman in *Portnoy*, Susan McCall played her in *My Life*, and she edges into centre-stage here as Claire Ovington, with whom the crippled Roth man, at the end of his tether, played out by all that sex and spite, tries to rebuild his life. The great hitch about the Big Woman, though – and now we see Roth's anxieties turning full circle – is that they will not *quite* do Anything. And this tiny omission is enough to allow sexual boredom to nip giggling through the bedroom door; suddenly, a lifetime of depleted possibilities is on view. Anything, as usual, is symbolised by enthusiastic fellatio (or perhaps it just *is* enthusiastic fellatio). Claire will do fellatio, but she won't . . . you know, do it enthusiastically. This is all it takes. Some people are never satisfied.

Well, never being satisfied is Roth's great theme. I wish I had 50p for every time the phrase 'on good terms with pleasure' is wistfully summoned in the 'My Life' trilogy. For pleasure and the Roth man are incompatible: they just do not get along, they just cannot work it out, they just get on each other's nerves. In *Portnoy* the condition was seen as a subject for black satire (the hero's desires harshly ridiculing his highmindedness), in *My Life* as a subject for tragic farce (the hero's highmindedness proscribing his desires); in the new book, however, the condition is seen as too disabling to be a subject for anything but itself. This is not only no joke, Roth seems to be saying, it is no novel either, nor anything else that has a shape: it is simply how it is. One feels both relieved and surprised when Roth himself acknowledges the constriction, and

Richard Eberhart

Night Thoughts

He shunned the nature of the
devil, thinking
I can put you down.
Jealousy, avarice, pain, suspicion
Flew in his face, and he said
Down, clown, down jester, down
savage beast
You put me down.
I can no longer bear your look, in man.
Everywhere I see
The monster behind the eyeball,
Injustice, cruelty, perversity, spleen,
An eye of mad anti-heroes
Destroying the earth, fouling the air
and waters,
The leer of hatred in blasts of anti-heart
How do I have the strength
To wrestle with the devil
When his gleeful power spits in my face?
The wicked, the vain, the treacherous,
the sullen
Thrive high in a world of reason-chill
While the irrationality
Of my pure source
Fresh and innocent as a child's face
Craves the mighty oracle of the truth,
Creatively I talk
Of remaking mankind by a breath of love,
Civilising and cultivating the elate,
Organising a better world by care
and strength,
Love the key to put the devil
to mischance,
Rise up, holy personages of the
salutary heart.

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expresses it so poignantly (in a projected introduction to a course of lectures which Claire calls 'Desire 341'):

> I am devoted to fiction, and I assure you that in time I will tell you whatever I may know about it, but in truth nothing lives in me like my life.

Paradoxically, too, Roth seems in this novel to have moved *beyond* autobiography. He no longer looks at life with the selective eye of the novelist: he looks at his own past with the fastidious frown of the literary critic, grading, evaluating, trying to separate the serious from the unserious. (I have always wondered why Roth's 'bookishness' relies on translated works – Chekhov, Gogol, Kafka, Dostoevsky – for its points of reference. I suspect that Roth now regards novels as how-to books about life, and he prefers to get their tips on living without the distractions and evasions of a responsive verbal surface.)

And what a sorrily half-tone world seeps through the self-immersion. *The Professor of Desire* is by far the most exotic in its locations of all Roth's novels – the East and West coasts, London, France, Italy, Prague, Hong Kong – and yet the changing landscapes remain blissfully unobserved (a derisory 'Sorry, Yank, 'e seems a bit sleepy tonight', for instance, is the extent to which Roth captures the texture of life in our own country). 'The whole damn thing could have taken place in Cincinnati!' says Kepesh after his Far East débâcle – and indeed it could have done. *My Life as a Man* contains a good, sharp section in which the narrator focuses his eyes on the year of 1968 and realises just how much has happened while he's been asleep inside himself. Not even this release – or injection of balance – is available to Kepesh: he is lost in a truly lugubrious solipsism, a mere patball of the neuroses which stride unchallenged through his psyche. Accordingly, all ironic distance has gone; nothing separates author and narrator; Roth sees no more than Kepesh sees.

How else has the world changed? It is quieter and flatter than it used to be, and there is no delight in it. Roth's novelistic ear, arguably his greatest gift as a writer, has evidently been well cauliflowered by recent events; only the Jewish-American characters retain their own voices, while everyone else joins the stilted and lachrymose debate on the hero's despair. Even the expository prose has lost its relish, settling for a droll, automatic elegance: it is full of ugly chimes ('my father intends, by the very intensity . . .', 'ending the term's work with three masterworks', etc) and back-to-the-drawing-board formulations ('my year as a visiting fellow in erotic daredevilry', 'she is not only stunning-looking, she is also real', etc). Some of the book's aridities may be an attempt to create a reflection of despair, but the zestlessness does sometimes read like a failure of professional sincerity, or nerve. Roth is never boring, though, somehow. You feel he has reached the end of something with this book – and high time too, in a way. Yet it will be more interesting, and not less so, to see what he does next. The element of play and indirection, which includes lyricism as well as laughter, cannot absent itself for much longer.

Julian Barnes

Mmoney

Great American Families *Times Books* £6.95
Six Men by ALISTAIR COOKE *Bodley Head* £4.95

Tempting as it is to ascribe modern democratic ideals to the founders of the American republic, the facts are rarely helpful. In the opinion of John Adams, the second President, democracy was 'the most ignoble and detestable form of government' – a sentiment most of the founders would have endorsed; and what emerges most steadily from the reheated *Sunday Times* articles on great American families is the lively contempt of the 'great' for those who are less rich, less successful, less dishonest, less shitty and less American (as in 'un-American activities') than they are. Henry Ford I let his managers know they were sacked by getting a gang of heavies to smash down their office ceilings, leaving their desks open to the sky; Solomon Guggenheim informed the nation that 'the wage earner is more extravagant in proportion to his earnings than the millionaire'; Cornelius Vanderbilt (a sort of crooked Freddie Laker) refused to insure his passenger ships and announced, when one of them sank with insufficient lifeboats, that his company was not responsible for human error; Nelson Rockefeller helped to bankrupt New York with his personal ambition.

The founders – and main beneficiaries – of American capitalism are individually unpleasant (as V. S. Pritchett puts it, 'America enlarges the ego at the expense of any other aspects of the personality') and collectively scary. Contemptuous of the weak and the foreign (exploitation of Central and South America by the Guggenheims, Vanderbilts and Rockefellers is a seamy running theme), thuggish toward trade unions, they eventually eased their way into philanthropy partly for cosmetic and partly for tax reasons. How deeply felt the philanthropy is can be deduced from comparing two organisations set up by the same family: the Guggenheim Foundation, which allows well-fed academics to take time off and write unnecessary books, expands and flourishes; the Murry Guggenheim dental clinic, established to give free treatment to the New York poor, has been wound up.

How strange, then, that the great families don't get all that bad a press. Or perhaps it isn't, considering the attention they give to public relations. In Room 5600 of their Centre (whose overall rents currently net

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them $100m. a year) the Rockefellers have two sets of press files, one marked 'public' and one 'sensitive': like keeping two sets of books. If V. S. Pritchett's contribution to *Great American Families* is the most stylish and epigrammatic ('Money – a word which even today in New York speech seems to begin with a stressed double "m" ') and Peter Conrad's the most ingenious (what editor decided that the two Roosevelts made a dynasty?), Edward Jay Epstein's, on the Rockefellers, is the most gratifyingly instructive. Key moments in Nelson Rockefeller's career and happily frustrated drive for the presidency show how little the rich and powerful have changed. He grew up fixing the press in South America and spent unprecedented amounts of family money to become Governor of New York State; once there, he greased a lot of palms, pardoned one of his own crooked aides, viciously rejigged drug laws, quoted ludicrously false statistics about addicts to harden his image with the Republican Party, and issued the 'moral bonds' which were to help bankrupt the city. One backhanded reason for gratitude to Nixon is that his fall (and Ford's appointment as a first-termer) meant that Rockefeller's presidential ambitions for 1976 had to be aborted. For the bad old ways don't just persist: they work as well.

All this brute fact makes Alistair Cooke seem more of a society writer than he probably is. Ask devotees of his radio slot how they find him, and they'll probably reach for the word 'urbane': to the Englishman he's a version of what a decent (say Bostonian) American ought to be; to the American (who sees him fronting British classic serials on public service television) he's a version of what a decent Englishman already is. Where this leaves Mr Cooke himself is none too certain: and in *Six Men* he remains elusive, an odd mixture of the deferential and the tart. He decided to write about Chaplin, Edward VIII, Bogart, Adlai Stevenson, Russell and Mencken, he claims, because 'they are six men I have admired and also liked'. He spares us the more obvious qualification – that they are all extremely famous, and publishers prefer unexceptional opinions on the very famous to fresh opinions on the moderately famous.

But then Cooke himself does have a tendency to drop lines like 'Eliot I had known in England' without either elucidation or modesty. His piece on Russell is dining-car table-talk; that on Edward VIII leans heavily on Frances Donaldson, since Cooke met him 'no more than three or four times'. But his sketches of Mencken and Stevenson (whether because they are less famous, or Cooke knew them better, or both) have vigour and detail, and best exploit Mr Cooke's most effective manner – that of jaunty anecdotalism. Mencken, so proud of his journalistic skill that he worked his typing up to a parody of incompetence ('hitting the keys only with his tiny forefingers and spacing with his right elbow'); Stevenson, always the loser, yet prevented by his self-esteem from seeing he was lost. Cooke's best stories stress the sophisticated innocence of the man, the strange knack of doing the wrong thing for the right reason. In 1952, Stevenson was staying in the White House and was given the Lincoln Room:

> When he came to undress, he looked at the bed, he looked at the prints on the wall, he shuffled round the bed, staring at it in awe. He could not bring himself to lie in it. He bedded down on the sofa. I don't know if he was ever apprised of the catch: in Lincoln's day the bed wasn't there, the sofa was.

A man far from the Rockefeller concept of power, and, as Cooke justly concludes, 'the liveliest reminder of our time that there are admirable reasons for failing to be President'.

Philip French

Lost Time

Eyes, Etc.: A Memoir by ELEANOR CLARK
Collins £4.50

Some years ago the cultural attaché of the American embassy introduced a lecture by Mary McCarthy with the words 'Miss McCarthy needs no introduction' and then proceeded to read her entry in *Who's Who*. Eleanor Clark does need an introduction, and were she in *Who's Who* her *curriculum vitae* would closely resemble Miss McCarthy's. They are both Easterners by temperament who happened to be born on the Pacific Coast, were contemporaries at Vassar (Miss Clark could easily have been one of the Group), flirted with the Left in the New York literary world on graduation, and have published criticism, fiction and travel books; both married distinguished men of letters some years their senior, though in Miss Clark's case she was nearly 40 at the time of her marriage to Robert Penn Warren.

This comparison leads on into her *Eyes, Etc.* because, while her publishers invite us to compare it with Orwell's essays and Connolly's *Unquiet Grave*, the book that comes first to mind while reading Miss Clark's memoir is *Birds of America*. Like Mary McCarthy's novel, it is a meditation on social, cultural and ethical change of a kind familiar in New England literature, the two most notable earlier examples perhaps being *Walden* and *The Education of Henry Adams*. The characteristic stance is patrician and elitist, the tone that of elegant threnody. Miss McCarthy reflects in her novel on the transformation of Maine by the *nouveaux riches* and the holiday industry, and the corruption of Europe by American tourists. Miss Clark draws large inferences from the insensitive behaviour of weekend second-homemakers in Connecticut and ski-resort patrons in Vermont, and the corrosive effect American hippies have had on traditional hospitality in Crete. Although she is not writing fiction, she uses the moral fabulist's devices, like creating a neighbouring country family called 'The Tidies' who pathetically seek to impose an impossible order on nature, and building a powerfully querulous account of contemporary morality around 'Tykes', a bullying business tycoon who jumps the queue at a ski-lift.

What Miss Clark mostly notices around her is decline, decay and despair. The sense of community that existed in her battered East Side New York apartment block disappeared when the authorities wantonly pulled it down in the 1940s and dispersed its inhabitants. Her friends' children (but not her own student son and daughter) have become affectless, malevolent dropouts. An idealistic lawyer friend is murdered and his little daughter mentally crippled by a mugger of precisely the deprived kind his victim was dedicated to helping. It is illegal to burn leaves (they must be left out in 'thousands of ugly bags') but not to emit car-fumes. The bill of indictment is long and forcefully drawn. But it is only part of her book, and occasioned by a larger personal inquiry brought about by her initially partial and now near total blindness. The process began with the loss of sight in one eye three years ago, followed during 1976 by the inoperable decline of the other, a condition known as 'macular degeneration'.

During this second period – spent with her family on holiday in Greece and at their country home in New England – she kept this chronicle, writing Thurber-style on large sheets with a magic marker, interrogating herself, her maker (in whose existence she disbelieves) and her society. It is a self-conscious literary exercise, to which she frankly attests early on, when she explains that the suffering of others is a matter that must wait for later:

> Those OTHERS again. It's not time for them yet. I swear that I'll get to them but it's not time. Am not ready. No, I didn't mean to say that, would hate to admit it, I meant it would be self-indulgent here; messy. It's not time in the sense of form.

The book is no straightforward diary, and some readers are likely to find its ellipses and omissions irritating. The economic cost of going blind in America isn't even mentioned, nor the emotional costs for those

Christopher Reid

Baldanders

Pity the poor weightlifter
alone on his catasta,

who carries his pregnant belly
in the hammock of his leotard

like a melon wedged in a shopping-bag . . .
A volatile prima donna,

he flaps his fingernails dry,
then – squat as an armchair –

gropes about the floor
for inspiration, and finds it there.

His Japanese muscularity
resolves to domestic parody.

Glazed, like a mantelpiece frog,
he strains to become

the World Champion (somebody, answer it!)
Human Telephone.

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around her. She cuts back and forth in time, frequently concealing where she is. Except for her children, no one is referred to by name; her distinguished husband receives scarcely more than a couple of passing references – once for writing a dream poem about her, the other recording the way he appeared during an early stage of her declining sight:

> Your own dear husband bends to kiss you with a huge crooked mouth coming out of his ear and two noses or none. Naturally you laugh, and hurt his feelings. But that was the 'active' phase, only a few weeks; lines are straight again; now we're down to (I can't resist it, horror in language has its charm) the nitty-gritty.

Miss Clark is good on language and its relationship to experience. Later on she talks of the 'foggy snorkel' effect of the half-blind person undergoing the new submarine sensation of going to a party, and rebukes the oculist with the happy stickers on his door for the Watergate language of 'You're making a less than adequate effort'. He should have told her to 'try harder'.

Underpinning this investigation into human suffering, its meaning and how it should be borne, is a reading aloud of the blind Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, conducted through the year by the author, her family and friends. This is clearly what makes the publishers invoke *The Unquiet Grave*, and it's the part of a generally rewarding book that seems least satisfactory. It is less the pretentiousness, which one rapidly gets over, than the way the device tends to lower the quality of Miss Clark's ideas and prose. When she starts putting New World glosses on Old World legends, the sharp voice of the shrewd, unpatronising stoic sometimes gives way to the folksy drawl of the cracker-barrel philosopher, sitting in a Norman Rockwell version of one of those simple country stores the passing of which Miss Clark so much regrets.

Richard Ellmann

The Centre Holds

The Correspondence of Robert Bridges and W. B. Yeats edited by Richard J. Finneran *Macmillan* £6.95

Relations between poets tend to be intricate and troubled, mismatches riven by jealousy, affection at grips with ambition. This book of letters stands out, therefore, as incongruously gentle. Not that it was easy to quarrel with Robert Bridges, as his long correspondences with other writers demonstrate. The sparsity of letters registers no ill-feeling. Yeats, unlike Bridges, was neither retired and wealthy, nor until much later married, and in the absence of these attributes he was busy earning money and courting as well as founding literary societies and a theatre. For confidants he preferred women, and his principal correspondences, from Katharine Tynan to Ethel Mannin, were with them. Exchanging letters about craftsmanship with even so exalted a poet as Bridges had its onerous aspect.

Bridges initiated the correspondence at a time when the two men had not met, in June 1896. Characteristically, Yeats failed to answer his fan letter until December, and then forgot to sign his own reply. But he indicated a reciprocal admiration for Bridges's work sufficient to keep the correspondence going. Himself caught up in noisy disputes, Yeats could appreciate the counter-image of Bridges, serene at Boar's Hill. He accepted an invitation to stay a weekend there, and found Bridges to be – as he wrote much later – 'an image of mental and physical perfection'. Perhaps too perfect: 'His creative power is not great though very exquisite,' Yeats would say of Bridges to Tagore.

Their friendship retained the flavour of a talented older man (Bridges being senior by 21 years) intellectually wooing a busy and much more talented younger one. Yeats was always likely to find, with appropriate remorse, an unanswered Bridges letter wedged between the cushions and frame of an plays, and praised them quite unexpectedly easy chair. A few months after their first meeting he wrote an article about Bridges's for their 'unearthly excitement' and 'gathering passion', qualities much more prevalent in his own verse. In later judgment Yeats estimated Bridges as 'the chief scholar in English style now living', a sort of poetic equivalent of Pater. Sometimes, with diffidence, Bridges out of his scrupulous perfectionism proposed that his friend Yeats emend a word or phrase, and Yeats invariably assented. So Bridges urged him not to try to use the fraction 'four-fifths' in rhythmical prose, and not to alter 'bag' to 'thing' in 'Fergus and the Druid'. Yeats was polite, but omitted to make the promised changes.

Bridges never indicated precisely which qualities in Yeats attracted him, but presumably these were the strangeness and fiery resonance to which his own poetry, notable for quietude even when registering painful emotions, did not aspire. He also valued Yeats's prosodic inventions, easier to take than those of Hopkins; and he remarked that the line from *The Wanderings of Oisin*, 'Fled foam underneath him, and round him a wandering and milky smoke', constituted a new English metre. But he did not at all see the necessity of making poetry sound like the passionate utterance of an actual man. To Yeats's urging that he allow some of his plays to be produced on the stage, Bridges replied damply, 'I don't expect (or really wish) to see a play of mine on the stage.' The theatre made demands that were alien to poetry, so the best drama was closet drama.

Bridges is at his shrewdest when he deals with style. Two examples stand out in these letters. He commented on Yeats's 'The Celtic Twilight' and 'The Secret Rose' that the stories were 'artistically the worse for the apparent insistence on the part of the writer to have them taken otherwise (*i.e.* more seriously) than he suspects the reader would naturally take them'. Bridges had caught an equivocation between graciousness and missionary zeal which infects Yeats's efforts in the 1890s to deal with occult subjects.

The other example was Bridges's struggle to persuade Rabindranath Tagore to allow him to revise some poems from *Gitanjali* before reprinting them in an anthology. Tagore, whose own translations had already been revised by Sturge Moore and Yeats,

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among others, understandably thought that at some point the poems should be considered finished. But Bridges persisted. He took Tagore's sentence, 'And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest', and made it into 'And there cometh Evening, o'er lonely meadows deserted of the herds, by trackless ways, carrying in her golden pitcher cool draughts of peace from the ocean-calms of the west.' This is better, although such substitutions as 'cometh' for 'comes' and 'o'er' for 'over' are archaisms which Yeats would have discountenanced, and show something of Bridges's own weakness. Tagore resisted Bridges's insistence, until Bridges prodded Yeats into prodding Tagore, who at last submitted.

Though the two poets never became intimate, they wrote to each other with candour. Yeats was persuaded to come for another weekend many years after the first. He persisted, however, in regarding Bridges as a worthy from the remote past of poetry, before the hurlyburly had begun. So Bridges has to keep reminding Yeats not to call him 'Mr', and in unconscious riposte misspells his friend's name as 'Yates'. Their association continued tenuously until Bridges died, and it is pleasant now to think of the two poets, both of whom today seem patriarchal, sipping tea together at Boar's Hill. Their centres of energy lay far apart, and were allowed to remain so.

Mr Finneran has wisely included an appendix listing the books of Yeats owned by Bridges and those of Bridges owned by Yeats. In his editing he continues, as in his edition of James Stephens's letters, to use headnotes where footnotes are needed. The result is that the reader is constantly being offered in advance the explanation of details in a letter he has not yet read. Macmillan are surely at fault in allowing this continual distraction. The first few lines on p. xii of the introduction are garbled. It is not proper for the editor to make his own dedication to a book composed of other men's letters. Otherwise, Mr Finneran is usually helpful and deserves thanks for making available this modest yet charming book.

We must march my darlings

Diana Trilling **£6.50**

A varied and unusually courageous collection of essays about contemporary politics and culture. The essays, written between 1964-1974, deal with the Kennedy assassination, the drug culture, student rebellion, the war in Vietnam, anticommunism, women's liberation and the various changes in sexual attitudes and customs.

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George MacDonald Fraser

All For It

The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses edited by Anthony S. Wohl *Croom Helm* £7.95

Victorian Vortex: Pleasures and Peccadilloes of an Age by PIERS COMPTON *Hale* £5.50

If ever I find myself thinking that I know a little about Victorian history, there is a corrective for conceit which it is always a pleasure to apply. It consists of a course of intensive reading in the first ten volumes of *Punch*, covering the 1840s, and (quite apart from rediscovering that sense and impression of the age which seldom seems to find its way into even the best-researched histories) trying to track down and unravel every allusion and topicality which I do not understand. There are sure to be dozens on each page to mock my monumental ignorance, and they range from popular attitudes to the papacy to jokes about Colonel Sibthorpe's views on railway travel. I have yet to discover what was so funny about Robert Peel's velveteen trousers, but I suspect that tracing the jest to its source might be more rewarding than reading the latest learned work on the Corn Laws.

Anyway, it is one way of combining entertainment with a little light research, and it might commend itself to Professor Wohl, editor of and contributor to *The Victorian Family*, for he seems to take a more human, indeed old-fashioned, view of his work than many modern academics do. While acknowledging the demand of modern 'historical sociologists' for 'quantative assessments' in historical research, rather than 'impressionistic work by middle-class persons' (that's Engels and me, I gather), he points out gently but persuasively that not all aspects of Victorian family life, for example, can be quantified or precisely analysed; the researcher is forced to fall back on his 'impressions' and sense of period. Nowadays, when computers and data banks may be applied to population drifts and work patterns, and portentous conclusions drawn therefrom, Professor Wohl's view probably verges on heresy; but, to quote one eminent Victorian, I am all for it. Whether you can learn more from a *Punch* cartoon or one of Jerrold's letters to his son than from a statistical rundown of the birth-rate in Salford in 1880 may be debatable; but I'll stake my wig that no data bank can compare with a passage from Dickens or Mrs Gaskell.

This is not to disparage the analytical and statistical approach to social history; the man who can show numerical proof that one Victorian woman in three was in domestic service at some time in her life has added an important mite to history. But understanding is something else, and that, I take it, is what Professor Wohl is saying. His book, a collection of essays by American academics on British Victorian family life, proves the point. The method is interesting, and probably growing in popularity: take a general theme, and turn each writer loose in his or her own special area – childbirth, popular novel-writing, cotton mill work, and so on. The result is obviously patchy and erratic, and none the worse for that, because comparison underlines the fact that however intensive the research or scholarly the approach, what matters in the end is the sense of historical form, and depth of human understanding.

To pick one of the best, John Hawkins Miller on Victorian childbirth traces the development of what had been a 'familiar folk event', complete with gossips, wet-nurses, and the 'noisy rally-round of friends', into something approaching a science, with Queen Victoria exerting her massive influence, perhaps not always wittingly, on the side of sanity and progress. Probably no subject could highlight so well the dilemma of Victorian delicacy, the conflict between taboo and common sense; it serves as a useful reminder that what has so often been called Victorian hypocrisy may occasionally have been no more than modest reticence.

This emerges, too, in Professor Wohl's contribution, which is on working-class incest, of all things, and which must have taken some courage to tackle, not from any lingering 19th-century hesitation about discussing the undiscussable, but because it is like striking a match in the jungle. Beyond flat statements by Shaftesbury and General Booth that incest certainly occurred more often than was generally imagined (supposing the Victorian imagination to be capable of any such atrocity), there is little firm evidence, but the essay is a model of intelligent study and speculation. One is left with the thought that Victorian indifference to the subject may not have been prompted only by the impossibility of doing anything about it in isolation, but also by an ingrained caution against publicising something better left alone. It is also fair to mention Elizabeth Showalter's piece on Subversive Novels – why did Victorian ladies show such a partiality for fiction dealing with domestic murder and bigamy? – and David Roberts on the Victorian father, 'remote, sovereign, and benevolent', and, on this showing, a good deal nicer than the stern stereotype of Mr Barrett.

Piers Compton's approach to Victoriana is entirely different. He has a prodigious

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acquaintance with the eccentricities, sexual and otherwise, of the age, and a fine memory for such details as what Lord Palmerston said to the railway porter who confiscated his cigar, and the taunts which urchins threw after Disraeli in the street. He delights to dot about from one anecdote to another – thus we have Prince Bertie in bed with his first actress, Edmund Gosse's parents on their knees at breakfast thanking God for the victory of the Alma, Gladstone reforming harlots by presenting them with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and recommending a visit to the seaside, Lord Cardigan dismissing Tennyson's 'Light Brigade' as 'damned rubbish', Carlyle intent on shooting the hens that kept him awake at night, Daniel O'Connell hurling *The Old Curiosity Shop* out of a train window because Little Nell had died, Irving hiring a flatulent horse for *Don Quixote* – many old favourites and, to me at least, many new ones, especially about the pre-Raphaelites. I never knew about Swinburne.

Valentine Cunningham

Geog & Hist

A Superstitious Age by ROSALIND BRACKENBURY *Harvester* £4.50

Plots and Counterplots: More Unknown Thrillers by LOUISA MAY ALCOTT edited by Madeleine Stern *W. H. Allen* £5.95

Ruffo in Calabria by PETER NICHOLS *Constable* £4.50

Fables by YVONNE MITCHELL illustrated by Bert Hollander *Mid-Northumberland Arts Group* £4

Despite the sweeping accusation, the bid for larger significance made by its title, *A Superstitious Age* is keener on simply giving up its events to the reader than on making an analysis of them. It's about the flight of a historian husband, known, nudgingly, as J. (not quite up, you see, by way of anxieties, to Kafka's K., but nearly so), away from his settling English ménage, a child, and a wife earnestly into evening classes on yoga and the like, off to Aix-en-Provence and an enticing line of research in the library of a deceased professor, assisted by the professor's rather enticing daughter. The wife, naturally, takes up with a macrobiotic, guitar-picking student until J. returns home when his child falls through a greenhouse.

Not, as story lines go, too unordinary. More notable, though, about the scholar's progress – what rescues it from the *Knitters Journal* mediocrity of the novel's thoughts on ancient and modern superstitions about God and marriage and such – is the noticing prose with which it's rendered. Much can be forgiven a novelist with so energetic a capacity for packing things, their surfaces, their smells, into her paragraphs ('Coffee, narcissi, diesel oil, fresh bread; these were the smells of his morning'). As the basis of a mode of perceiving, of course, this use of the hard bit, the intransigently Larkinesque gobbet ('tussocky, littered'), a meccano of macaronic phrases bolted together by overworking commas and full-stops, can occasionally wear you down. 'Her sentences, on paper, had never exactly flowed,' reflects J of a missive from his missus that's expressed much like our novel. Still, 'Carolyn's letters, in their bluntness, their baldness, were truthful as she herself was, to the point of idiocy'. Not a bad description of our novel either, nor, come to that, a bad tribute to it.

High among the many gratifications afforded by Madeleine Stern's second gathering of Louisa M. Alcott's trashy melodramas (garnered from forgotten periodicals of the 1860s like *The Flag of Our Union* and *Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner*) is the pleasure of learning, yet again, that even the primmest of governessy authors can burn with the passions of the yellow press. Sharper readers of *Little Women* will recall how Jo March 'rashly took a plunge into the frothy sea of sensational literature' and 'concocted a "thrilling tale"' for the *Weekly Volcano*. Her author, we now know, was frequently as rash. Of course, the result was, in a sense, lurid rubbish, written to a spottable set of formulae in a kind of code. Whispers must inevitably be *soft*, laughter *exultant* or *scornful*, and exclamations *wrathful*. Actions are blunt and decided, moods stark ('dark and defiant the face, with fierce black eyes, frowning eyes, and the gleam of set teeth between lips parted like a muttered malediction'). Frank Leslie's clientele being none too subtle, dénouements tend to be heavily anticipated, and arduously reflected on once they've happened. There are few unexpected revelations: clues come so thick and threefold (like the handkerchief, and the veil, *and* the monogrammed button a pursuing lover picks up on a single beach). With deaths, murders, suicides, madness, a poisonous ring, evil Spaniards (lots of those) and plotting guardians, narrative longueurs are, alas, too few. But even now the stories' little women are fascinating mixtures of hard and soft, hovering between the yielding and the viperous, divided between being marble women, sculpted and fettered, the hoarded beauties of conniving males, and being mistresses of their own fate, scornful of men, rebutters of the world.

Revealingly, the drugs they take in surprisingly vast quantities are, like love and marriage in these stories, most ambivalent. One girl eats opium to escape the pain of her enclosed life, another takes hashish to 'make me soft and lovable like other women. I'm tired of being a lovely statue'. The 'romantic cigarettes' a wily uncle gives his 17-year-old ward are most enjoyable ('the narcotic influence of the herbs diffused itself like a pleasant haze over all my senses'): but she's soon being carried off drugged to the mad-house so her fortune can be appropriated. Evidently the Gothic could tell truths about marriage that more serious fiction – even Louisa M. Alcott's – often refused to entertain.

Peter Nichols's first switch from straight prose to fiction has produced a gingerly reconstruction of Cardinal Ruffo's campaign in 1799 to win back the kingdom of Naples from republicanism and other wickedly Frenchified influences. The story is meanderingly recalled ('By the way, it just strikes me that I had never told you the name of my wife') by a teacher of languages unwillingly enlisted by the scheming Ruffo as emissary, confidant and general mug and fall-guy. At one point the narrator disclaims 'wishing to appear over-clever'. Too rough he's not cleverer, for where there might be the colourful excitements of military action, not to mention the intriguing complications of Ruffo's character as man of God and of blood, there's little but an unsteady and unanimating drizzle of well-researched geog and hist. So that while much is told, too little is shown: indeed, that useful old critical distinction between telling and showing couldn't have found a much apter illustration.

It's difficult nowadays to write tiny fictions without sounding as emptily pretentious as the kind of *nouveau romancier* – like Giles Gordon – who's gone in for telling minuteness. And some of Yvonne Mitchell's *Fables* can be not merely obscure but hollow. Nor does she particularly bring off the stories clutching kings and knights and white panthers to their icky bosoms like Giles Gordon – who's gone in for Better are the stories touching on the surreal ways of bureaucrats; best of all, the domestic fables (like the one about a girl so gifted above the ordinary, so visionary about her muscles and shoe-laces, she never does anything). Best because most morally engaged: and quietly rebuffing the blurb's murmurs about 'without a moral'.

Seven Dada Manifestos

This translation by Barabara Wright makes available in English for the first time Tristan Tzara's famous manifestos (£4·95). From Dadaism, born in Zurich in 1916, grew the great range of Surrealist Art and writing which can now be seen in a retrospective exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. Also of interest and newly available in paperback are **The Theatre and Its Double** by Antonin Artaud (£1·95) and **The Lulu Plays** by Frank Wedekind (£2·75).

Love is a Feast

Sylvia Bourdon's highly entertaining sexual autobiography (£4·50) is also a powerful political manifesto for total sexual liberation and an end to discrimination against those who live in harmony with their natural instincts.

New Poetry

When Sheila Wingfield's first collection of poems appeared in 1938, Walter de la Mare commented on the 'tragic beauty', 'pure imaginative realisation' and masterly craftsmanship of her work. **Her Storms** – *Selected Poems 1938-1977* (£7·50) presents a comprehensive selection from a life-time of poetic achievement, while **Admissions** – *Poems 1974-1977* (£5·00) includes all her most recent work.

Journal of Beckett Studies No 2

This issue (£2·50) contains a tribute by Samuel Beckett to his friend, the poet, translator and original publisher of *Echo's Bones*, George Reavey, together with fascinating accounts of literary Paris in the 30's and articles and reviews on Beckett and Dickens, Yeats, Synge, Sartre and Pinter.

Subscription rates £5·00 ($11.00) for 2: future issues £3.00 per copy.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Eric Ambler

The End of the Affair

My affair with the *Scientific American* began 30 years ago. Following the unremarkable discovery that an education in science was no insurance against becoming a scientific illiterate in later life, I had been looking for ways of keeping in touch. The monthly *Scientific American* seemed to be just the sort of thing I needed. Only during this past year have I learnt how completely I was mistaken.

It was founded in 1845 by Rufus Porter and Alfred Ely Beach. Both men were talented inventors as well as journalists, and Porter, sometimes called 'the Yankee Leonardo', was a painter too. Murals of his, depicting marvellous machines he hoped to build, still survive in some old New England houses. He and Beach were visionaries and their *Scientific American* spoke for the buoyant rationalism of the period that committed their country to the industrial revolution. Those to whom it spoke were, in its founders' words, the 'enterprising mechanics' concerned with 'the advancement of several new, curious and useful arts which have recently been discovered and introduced'. There was nothing condescending in their use of the term 'mechanics'. Had they been Englishmen, the enterprising persons they might have had in mind would have been the disciples of 'natural philosophers' like Davy and Faraday, the assistants of engineers like Stephenson and I. K. Brunel and those with inquiring minds who attended Royal Institution lectures. In other words, the magazine was designed to be read by scientists, engineers, technicians, self-improvers and dabblers in science.

That is still, more or less, a fair description of its readership. More or less, because in these days many of its readers are holders of top jobs in industry and the professions (even 30 years ago you didn't see all those advertisements for sports-cars and whisky) and perhaps because the magazine has less time now for self-improvement and dabbling. Today, it caters primarily for the scientist or technician in search of assimilable information about disciplines and specialities other than his own.

Has it, then, become simply another What's-On in science and technology? It certainly has not. *Scientific American* articles are popularisations of a most superior and special kind. Few 20th-century scientists, British or American, have been distinguished for their ability to write readable prose. During the past few years, indeed, many of them seem to have been trying, with their unparseable sentences and involuted jargon, to emulate the social anthropologists. Yet *Scientific American* articles are, for the most part, not only authoritative but also entirely lucid. Obviously the writers, many of whom nowadays are researchers reporting in print for the first time on original work, have in some way been persuaded to see that their good-tempered submission to a ruthless editing process will be beneficial to all concerned. If there is anything in *Scientific American* that the reader cannot understand, he will usually have only himself to blame. That editorial staff does an amazing job.

Moreover, there has never been, despite its name, anything in the least parochial about the magazine's editorial policies. It has, from the beginning, looked to European – and especially to British – universities as well as American for its contributors. It is now published in Japanese and Italian language editions as well as English. The 'Science and the Citizen' feature has always been liberal in tone. For example, in the year 1876-77 – which saw it carry paragraphs about the invention of the telephone ('Professor Graham Bell has succeeded in transmitting the tones of the human voice by telegraph') and about a mass meeting of cyclists at Hampton Court where legislation concerning bicycle bells was discussed – the following statement also appeared:

> In New York, in Philadelphia, in Newark and in many other of the large populous centers, the abnormal spectacle is now being witnessed of working men standing together and marching in procession to demand of the authorities an opportunity to earn an honest living. It is impossible not to feel the greatest commiseration and concern for men reduced to this predicament.

Yes, an admirable publication. It is with sorrow that I reveal that things between us are not as they used to be.

Of course, there never was a time when I understood everything in it. Much of the particle physics and biochemical stuff was always beyond me, and I was disconcerted when advances in the technology of the electronic potato-chip got me farther into solid-state theory than I found comfortable. The archaeological, geophysical and astronomical pieces have generally remained within reach, however. Naturally, there has been some skipping from time to time, but whenever I dipped into the 'Mathematical Games' feature I was nearly always able to understand what the fun was supposed to be about. As you see, self-deception can be dreadfully persistent in these cases. Although I have been dimly aware for several years of some deterioration in the relationship, full knowledge of the extent of the estrangement did not hit me until last July.

There used to be a regular monthly feature called 'The Amateur Scientist'. It is only occasional now, but when it does appear it still displays many of its old characteristics. It deals with projects for the dabbler; little inquiries that may be conducted without treading on any sensitive academic or professional toes (things like, say, analysing the responses of newts in polluted pond water to a flashing sunlamp), or do-it-yourself instrument designs. The latter have often been quite ambitious. New designs for seismographs were offered on two occasions. The instructions for building an inexpensive laser-beam generator must have given pause even to the most ardent dabbler.

It is perhaps worth noting, however, that these particular feature articles, immaculately written though they may be, are always illustrated with curiously crude line drawings. Elsewhere in the magazine, artwork standards are of the very highest, but the 'Amateur Scientist' drawings invariably look as if they have been sketched on the backs of old envelopes. They are, well, amateurish. It is as if the editors are telling us something. Such as: yes, they *are* a bit ashamed of dabblers' corner and, yes okay, they go on making it look a bit tatty so that it won't be resented by the serious readers. No, they don't want to kill it off entirely. After all, they still carry quite a bit of advertising aimed at the experiment-kit markets as well as at those high-school kids and college students whose parents can afford to give them catadioptric mini-telescopes.

In the issue of last July there was an 'Amateur Scientist' feature article proposing a series of optical experiments. There were the usual crummy line drawings showing the apparatus required and how it worked. There was also, though, a fine colour reproduction of a beautifully photographed drop of water. That should have warned me. There was nothing amateurish about the photograph. There was nothing amateurish about the subject of the article, not to me anyway. It was entitled, sweetly, 'How to create and observe a dozen rainbows in a single drop of water', and I found it incomprehensible. Appalled, I at once went through the entire issue to see if there was anything at all in it that I really understood. There was a little – about 10 per cent of the whole was my best estimate. A colour advertisement for Puerto Rican rum smiled at me from the page facing 'Contents'.

So, an elderly thriller writer has at last been forced to recognise that the scientific education of his youth is totally obsolete. Sad, no doubt, but does it matter? No, but residual pique prompts a question. The need for many of those in government to be sufficiently trained in science to understand the nature and meaning of the scientific advice which they receive is now fairly generally accepted. Who tells them when they need refresher courses?

Among this week's contributors:

ERIC AMBLER's latest thriller was *Send No More Roses* (Weidenfeld).

GEORGE MACDONALD FRASER's most recent novel, *Flashman's Lady*, was published last year by Barrie & Jenkins.

RICHARD ELLMANN is the author of *James Joyce: A Biography*; he has also edited volumes II and III of the *Letters of James Joyce*.

RUSSELL DAVIES is film critic of the *Observer*.

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Television

Russell Davies

Stage-Struck

Industrial action within the BBC has made TV viewing a precarious matter for many days past. There has been a marked tendency for programmes to disappear, especially late on in the evening. Some shows have gone out with bits falling off them by the minute. Saturday night's whopping opera from La Scala, *Don Carlos* (BBC-2), must have lost scores of thousands of viewers in the prologue and the early acts, where the appearance of sub-titles had been vetoed by inoperatives in London. Later on in the lengthy proceedings, these visual aids were restored to us, but by this stage the viewer was either addicted or absent.

The singing certainly encouraged addiction, with the Russian bass Nesterenko in particularly fine voice, very piercing for one so low. It was a pity that his compatriot Ghiaurov was prevented from sharing the Grand Inquisitor scenes with him (this time, I understand, through industrial action on the part of an employer, the jealous Karajan). Another Russian, Elena Obtratsova, looked handsome as the Princess Eboli and sang commandingly, if a bit coarsely for my taste; Margaret Price, by contrast, took the Queen's role gently, and was not wholeheartedly encouraged by the crowd, whose affections had lain elsewhere from the start. (There's always an element of *Jeux Sans Frontières* in these international productions.) Placido Domingo was the man they had all come to see, and indeed he sang as big as he looked. Nothing can prevent him looking enormous. His first aria was greeted, in our part of the world anyway, by a generous electronic fart from the Eurovision wiring, but otherwise all was well. The audience would have gone berserk with joy in any case, I suspect; at *Carmen* in Edinburgh last year, they whooped and bellowed their whole 20 quid's worth every time Domingo ceased to sing, even though for the first half of the evening he was harbouring in his throat one of the largest frogs known to oesophago-amphibian science.

I must confess to having sneaked briefly away from this sombre bonanza, in the deplorable direction of *Match of the Day* (BBC-1). Not for the football, you understand, but for the return of David Coleman, whose earnings now at least approach the same loony Bahamoid bracket as Placido Domingo's. David had been heard earlier, on *Grandstand* (BBC-1), reporting to the studio after the end of his game at West Ham. 'They've been shouting up to me, *Will this be the main match tonight?*', he revealed, and one knew at once that the crowd had hit on the truth of David's temperament: this was the one question he himself desperately wanted to have answered. So it was hard luck on David when *Match of the Day* fell victim to the vespertine industrial aggro. Half the Carlisle game was shown instead, unedited, and that was it. That golden throat was never opened to the airwaves. *Parkinson* (BBC-1) was wheeled on early, and Ustinov, in disconsolate verbal overdrive, depletedly plugged his book.

All manner of 'new' 'series' started up, though in many cases both terms needed to be qualified. Things like *International Indoor Bowling*, a vicious game on BBC-2, turned out to be a series of three programmes. We started with the semi-finals. Perhaps there are only four international indoor bowlers. Another series of three, *The Countryman* (BBC-1), proved to be one of those marginal religious programmes, where the evocation of an atmosphere of perpetual Sunday is deemed enough to fulfil the statutory requirements of Sabbath broadcasting. The idea here was to show us that life in parts of Hertfordshire at reaping-time is still suspended between Thomas Hardy and L. P. Hartley, give or take a few ugly machines. An 'artist' in a straw hat sat in a field, drawing ears of this and sprigs of that, while sweaty reapers chomped to and fro on their combines, scattering foxes. Ladies festooned the local church with giant carrots, or blushing parsnips, depending on your TV set, and the squire's son feelingly toasted the 'farm staff' at harvest supper. Nobody risked spoiling the mellow mood by asking the assembled brawnies to rise and reply.

This programme was doubtless a sort of spiritual preparation for Sunday evening's new series (a 13-episoder), *All Creatures Great and Small* (BBC-1). There were in fact creatures great and small on all channels at this point: people teaching West African apes to cope with the jungle on BBC-2, and the Muppets on ITV. I stuck with James Herriot, though God knows why; I've seen both the films, and here they were again. Same old pus-filled hooves and cows' arses. A few cows' arses in Terence Dudley's direction, too, I thought, notably when John Sharp, who is an eccentric performer in the first place, was allowed to go out of a door and then to poke his head round it again, simply to make a battily baleful Yorkshire face – the kind that combines menace, thrift and fundamental good nature, all in one pop of the eyeballs.

The principals, I suppose, got away with it. Christopher Timothy's suitability to the role of the juve horse-doctor is questionable; you wouldn't call him too young for it, for instance. But by dint of donning an expression of fatuous optimism and letting it slip now and again, he muddled cornily through. An actor born in Merioneth should do better, and probably will. As for Robert Hardy's Siegfried, well, anything is permitted to characters called Siegfried.

Since my space is drawing peacefully towards its close, I had better say that *Read All About It* (BBC-1) made a perfectly amiable and unworried restart under the chairmanship of Ronald Harwood. He has obviously studied Melvino fairly closely, though in looks he inclines more towards Placido Domingo. Much more urgent viewing, in its choppy way, was Richard Marquand's *Personal Report* (ATV), in which 'Maria' from Chile and 'Rosa' from Paraguay tremblingly retailed their awful first-hand accounts of South American torture. American governmental types popped up to assure us that concern was being shown, and that having Andrew Young about the place was going to make a whole lot of difference to foreign leaders' human-rights policies. At this point, I rather lost the appetite for the later *Washington Behind Closed Doors* (BBC-1), which is a good gloat but an unearned one.

Opera

Eric Sams

Masked Balls

Die Fledermaus Covent Garden; further *performances 14, 17 January*
From the House of the Dead *Coliseum; further performances 13, 19 January*

Perhaps the reasoning behind the new Covent Garden production ran somewhat thus. *Die Fledermaus* is all about a bat and a ball; so it ought to go with a swing in Britain, and even make a big hit. Let's turn the title role into a sport-loving Englishman, complete with tennis-racket (bat, get it?). Then his ex-partner Rosalinde, now unsafely married and living in Vienna, can be English-speaking too. The obscure intrigues and suspicions (which also notoriously fly by twilight) will become plain as noonday. The switch from English to German and back again can be made confusingly comical in itself; audiences will chuckle at the misunderstanding *an sich.* There is further fun to be extracted from additional updated exchanges, or even sex changes; how about extending the mezzo-soprano part of Orlofsky into a tenor role? Then let's write plenty of new musical allusions into the score for the fans and the critics to identify, if they can. We could easily persuade suitable stars to grace the night with guest appearances. For the TV production we can even pretend that all the BBC-2 viewers have been asked along to the Act Two party, and print the *Radio Times* heading in the guise of a posh invitation card. For that same unsophisticated public, we'll pop a couple of the cast into a box at the opera-house, complete with a comic costume and a bogus accent, all ready to expound the plot. That'll make a change from Richard Baker, and also show that *Die Fledermaus* is undemandingly light entertainment. We can't expect the ordinary British viewer or opera-goer to swallow the foreign ironies and complexities of Johann Strauss without copious doses of soothing syrup.

Well, some at least of those contentions may have been soundly based; in the event, the new production has proved widely appreciated and successful. The brilliantly lit and staged soirée rightly enjoyed a rousing reception, because it was one. On TV, Daniel Barenboim played the first Chopin Ballade as a party piece. Isaac Stern flew in from New York and flew through the Mendelssohn finale; a flitting tribute to the occa-

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sion. Otherwise the same product was available in the home as in the Garden; and the preview afforded a revealing comparison. Since about 1600, the word 'screen' has connoted a concealment from viewers, and it looks to me as if the TV screen is continuing that tradition. Direct relay gave no very clear picture of the extra depth and dimension of Julia Oman's resplendent sets, or the wide-ranging movement of Leopold Lindtberg's engaging production. But conversely these same distances and diversions made the sung German that much harder to follow. So the great advantage of TV is seen to be its sound (full credit to Graham Haines); and even that came best from Radio 3 stereo.

Personally I was not much attracted by the seasonal novelties, in either medium. All the added language was too obviously tongue in cheek; and its interpretation soon became seriously confused. How could the Viennese party plausibly be compèred in English at all, even without the repeated acknowedgments to Sir Frederick Ashton? At this rate the spot will soon be taken over by speeches from the sponsors. Next, the constant spoof highlighting of the dialogue predictably showed up some good singers as indifferent actors. Then most of the musical quotations seemed to strike a false note, whether because they were too blatant (Wagner) or too obscure (Wolf). It might have been better to play safe and keep a straight *Fledermaus*. Still, the score was a winning one, as ever, with some fine individual performances. Benjamin Luxon as Dr Falke, alias the Bat, always twinkled cheerfully and sometimes shone, especially in his Bruderschaft round of drinks and kisses, to which Zubin Mehta's uncommonly sober tempo lent an air of blissful intoxication. Not only Hildegard Heichele's laughing song but her whole portrayal was a liltingly vivid demonstration of how readily a maid can become a mistress. Kiri te Kanawa as Rosalinde looked and sounded beautiful, and the difficult Austro-Hungarian interpretation was well managed; but she was a little lacking in sheer dash, even in her rightly acclaimed Czardas. Hermann Prey was nimbly flexible of voice and presence, though his agreeable baritone is hardly light enough for the frivolity of Eisenstein. Robert Tear's voice sounded to me just as miscast and ineffective in Orlofsky's music as his mock-Russian accent.

It was a mild protest against the Orlofskys of this world that nearly precipitated Dostoevsky into the next one. He faced a firing-squad, literally; but his sentence was clemently commuted to the living death of Siberia, where prison was no joke. Nor is Janacek's last opera, which is based on that harrowing experience. In real life, no doubt, the naked truth would stand out in stark contrast to masked balls; but in the unnatural history of opera, *From the House of the Dead* is a related species of *Die Fledermaus*. They both depict humanity in its usual desperate quest for affection, recognition and diversion. Even the convicts have a New Year's party complete with cabaret turns. But on the present showing Janacek's masterpiece lacks the inner coherence of Strauss's. Much of his score is laid out in repetitive patterns of agonised feelings, like a flogged back; in its more optimistic moods the music keeps on escaping from Siberia, leaving the dejected cast and the sombre sets far behind. Furthermore, the orchestral dynamics and timbres conspire with the Coliseum acoustics, a misaccentuated translation and lack of determined vocal projection to render the words mainly inaudible; and though inarticulateness may be English, and even National, it's certainly not Opera.

Films

John Coleman

Naming of Parts

Stroszek (AA) *Paris Pullman* and *Phoenix*
The Innocent (X) *Screen on the Hill*
Servante et Maîtresse (X) *Minema*
Kenji Mizoguchi Season *NFT*

The sly-eyed, slow-uttering Bruno S. is back again. Werner Herzog, a German director prepared to take risks with his casting that are bound to arouse some qualms, used him, you will recall, as the innocent savage taught party tricks in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* Herzog has something of a corner in odd fellows: dwarfs, a compulsive ski-jumper, hypnotised actors; and the results can be less than endearing. But then I seem to be one of the few who actively disliked Tod Browning's long-lost *Freaks* (1932), with its manipulation of pinheads and other misbegotten humans, when it was disinterred for public consumption some 14 years ago. Bruno S. hardly belongs to teratology, it is true, but his real-life circumstances have been pathetic enough. Now somewhere in his unshaven forties, he is an orphan who has spent much of his time institutionalised – homes, mental hospitals, jail – when not eking out a living on the outside by playing an accordion in courtyards and himself for Herr Herzog. Perhaps too much of this: he may, after all, be relishing every second of his hours on camera, into which he disconcertingly looks sidelong once in a while. This last bit of unprofessionalism is probably exactly what his director wants: it so casually disturbs our expectations of fiction movies. And *Stroszek* is raw, strange, compelling.

It may parallel the existence of its central character in essentials and its title could well be what the S. stands for: elsewhere, his companions are a pretty grotty-looking whore, Eva (Eva Mattes), and a charming, white-haired gnome, Scheitz (Clemens Scheitz), so the naming of parts encourages this notion of a 'faction', Herzog-style. Stroszek emerges from prison, giving his 'great Hungarian word of honour' to the anxious governor that he will stay off booze and spruce up, to head inevitably for a sleazy bar and a beer. In some ugly, authentic passages that make Fassbinder look monumentally mannered, he re-encounters Eva being slapped about by a couple of pimps, offers her sanctuary in his flat cluttered with musical instruments, himself gets done over by the bad guys. His eccentric little neighbour, Scheitz, is off to Wisconsin, where he has a nephew. Eva turns a few more tricks and soon this bruised trio finds itself in the land of promises, promises. Stroszek stolidly enunciates disillusion as his pet mynah bird is quarantined: 'What sort of country is this where they confiscate Bruno's Beo?'; and they all share a windblown, bemused moment high up on a skyscraper gazing down at the concrete towers of New York. They buy a second-hand car and finally make Wisconsin. There are marvellous, deliberately apocalyptic views of sky and landscape en route, caught by Thomas Mauch's fresh, travelling camera. Bruno gets work in the nephew's car-repair shop and Eva becomes a waitress in a motorway restaurant. Scatty old Scheitz goes round testing his theory of animal magnetism. They acquire a vast, anchored mobile home, colour TV, all mod cons.

Yet they are not anchored. This is America very much seen through foreign eyes. 'Have a nice day,' says the neat, nervous young man from the bank, dispossessing them when payments fall overdue. Eva cuts out with a pair of truck drivers. Bruno and Scheitz try to rob a bank (it's closed), but settle for a barber shop, then a supermarket. The old man is picked up by the police while Bruno drives off with a frozen turkey and their rifle. The end is surreal, emblematic, what you will: at once arresting and facile. Bruno Stroszek's stolen truck breaks down at a tourist-trap Indian reservation. He leaves it to circle, burning merrily away, while he sets in motion a series of ghastly domestic animal side-shows (rabbit on a miniature fire-engine, duck on drum, a piano-playing chicken and a chicken that dances) before mounting a chair-lift that keeps on going. The cops arrive; a shot; a chicken dancing, dancing. However discomfiting, it is the near-Blakean enigma of Bruno S., a creature laboriously reacting to a world by implication (and selection) shown as madder than he, that holds the melancholy revel together. I have an awful suspicion this will be one of my films of the year.

Two visits to Luchino Visconti's last creation, directed from a wheelchair, have incited an identical reaction. *The Innocent*, drawn from a lengthy D'Annunzio novel, is an unduly reverential piece of fin-de-siècle visual upholstery, salon territory done in umbers and reds, opulent, elegant and ocularly suffocating. Giancarlo Giannini of the clapped-out eyes, wearing a weak little beard, is insecure as the aristocratic philanderer Tullio and thereby hangs the tale, which concerns his long-suffering wife's taking a lover, bearing a baby as a result, the lover's death, Tullio's jealous exposure of the baby on a wintry balcony, its death, Tullio's rejection by both wife and mistress, and his suicide. Giannini has a line which sums it up: 'Peasants are pleased to see their masters well dressed.' Jennifer O'Neil looks stunning as the mistress and there are one or two genuinely erotic scenes between the initially demure Laura Antonelli as the abused wife and Tullio. The subtitles are shameful: 'I'm perspired', 'I thought of a catastrophy'.

Bruno Gantillon's *Servante et Maîtresse*, with a scenario by Dominique Fabre, is

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little more than one of those stylistic exercises mingling sexual aberration with class warfare so dear to the French: Genet and it. The 'it' or little more is provided by the bulky Andrea Ferréol, a lady who contrives without apparent effort to look like Angela Rippon, Simone Signoret and death, as the plot – she is a maid who inherits a millionaire's estate and keeps on the millionaire's nephew, who had previously humiliated her in the obvious ways, as *her* domestic – goes through its predictable motions. The two-hander, which it basically is, swerves implausibly in the service of our lower appetites. The 'X' is presumably for fellatio. Turn, rather, to the great Japanese master, Mizoguchi (1898-1956), all of whose extant films – around a third, alas, of his output – are currently on display at the NFT. There is a stunning PS showing on 31 January, *Kenji Mizoguchi; The Life of a Director*, a sprawling documentary made by Kaneto Shindo. Do try to catch this, if only to hear it giving the lie to the director's often-quoted preference for period subjects and to stare in amaze at ex-stars of his, male and female alike, almost all with dyed black hair, politely hemming and hawing while retailing lavatory anecdotes.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Ploy Acting

The Guardsman *Lyttelton*
Frozen Assets *Warehouse*
Spinechiller *Duke of York's*

If Laurence Olivier were to appear at the family hearth disguised as a Red Indian, a Chinese commissar, or even a five-legged insect from an alien planet, I don't doubt that Joan Plowright would promptly recognise that hooded eye and clangorous voice. Even I, a mere outsider, could guarantee to penetrate any camouflage affected by him, Gielgud or Richardson, and that from 40 feet away and without benefit of binoculars. But in far-flung Hungary great actors are more guileful and wives more gullible – or so we must be prepared to believe if Molnar's *Guardsman* is to maintain its marvellous ambiguity. This, roughly, is the situation. Nandor and Iliona are the Oliviers, Lunts or Burtons of Budapest, and he suspects her fidelity. How better to test it than mince into her drawing room in the guise of a sugar-candy soldier and importune her from beneath a ginger wig? He will become what he thinks, or fears, she wants a man to be, and see if she's able to resist the romantic ideal planted before her.

She does not resist – or does she, in a way? If you want to remain ignorant of the ending, shut your eyes for the next dozen or so lines. Nandor is readying himself for outraged self-exposure when Iliona suddenly reveals she knew him all along, thus thrusting him into quite a quandary. If he believes her, he must accept he's an inadequate actor, no easy admission for so flaunting a narcissist. But if not, he's nine-tenths of a cuckold, a more distasteful status still. The questions proliferate, for the audience as well as him. Was she acting then or is she now? If she's telling the truth, why the sadness on her face? Is she disappointed at being cheated of a burgeoning affair, or is the trouble rather subtler? Could it be that she's lost what very many women must crave, simultaneous security and excitement, a husband and a lover crammed together in a single frame? None of these possibilities is excluded by canny Molnar. All, and more, are left teasingly open by Diana Rigg.

There's a musky langour about her Iliona, but it conceals a fidgety stomach. When she speaks of her 'unhappiness', she means it; and her damp cheeks at the play's end are, you feel, tantamount to a last-ditch recognition that this world, being this world, can never fulfil all her subcutaneous longings. Unluckily, her sexual unease isn't matched by Richard Johnson, whose Nandor is most himself when he's strutting, rather than fretting, upon the domestic stage. Molnar would surely have disapproved. He didn't think the character's jealousy histrionic, even if he was an actor. He knew only a pretty desperate husband would actually fix himself as bait to the hook and then use it to catch a rogue wife. Indeed Frank Marcus, whose deft and nimble translation this is, tells us in his introduction to the published text that Molnar was hurt when the audience laughed at what he thought a 'perfectly agonising' play, one in which he had tried to 'work off the most searing pain of my young life'. But Mr Johnson is too often content to fling about his arms like a distracted tic-tac man.

What the play needs, and merits, is a judicious blend of feeling and fun, and it does not get quite enough of either at the National, even at those potentially gorgeous moments when Mr Johnson's beloved is slithering between chastity and surrender. If she succumbs, the guardsman must display delight while the husband invisibly raves; if not, the guardsman must mope while the husband bounces. The possibilities are obvious and plentiful, but they are seized with no more firmness by Peter Wood's production as a whole than by Mr Johnson in particular. In a way, the dominant character is the set, a brilliant but wayward concoction by Ralph Koltai. This is a toy proscenium, the top plastered with gilded leaves and knowing, jaded faces lifted from Klimt, the walls bulging and flapping at a touch. It is an insubstantial place, rather like the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself, in whose terminal decline *The Guardsman* was written: it's also a place well suited to disguises and deceptions, ploys and lies, like those in the play. But it's one that can only encourage the production's worst tendency, which is to lacquer and polish reality, reducing both folly and anguish to the posturing of fairground puppets in a gallery of buckled and twisted mirrors.

Frozen Assets is the latest episode in Barry Keeffe's continuing chronicle of the no-hoper, the boy dubbed ignoramus, yob or hooligan by nice people with nice houses. This time, though, he ends as a some-hoper. During the day or two he's been on the run from Borstal, where he accidentally killed a screw, he's learnt enough to see what really successful crime might be, and he walks purposefully offstage, as if to set up shop himself. Before this there are some vivid encounters, as there always are when Keeffe is writing about the mouldering East End and its human substrata; but there are also times when one feels his social indignation, not his ear and eye, are in control of character and plot. No sooner has his absconder blundered into a nob household, as he rather implausibly does on several occasions, than it promptly reveals itself as spoiled, hypocritical and corrupt, wall-to-wall not only with conspicuous consumption but with people almost embarrassingly anxious to clinch the play's point for it. This is that the real crooks are those who take directorships in property companies, go on expense-account junkets to Bermuda, or nab scarce Jags by giving backhanders to the garage owner, not those who fiddle fruit machines, like the Borstal boy, or burgle plush pads, like his uncle. True, conceivably; but the idea needs a much more thorough airing if it isn't to emerge as a glib and green-eyed claim that two wrongs make a right.

Allan Hendrick, David Waller and David Howey, among other members of the RSC, see that the play has momentum, if not moment; but it would take more than the finest company in the land to animate *Brainshrinker*, *Gutshriveller*, *Bumnumber*, or whatever the soi-disant thriller at the Duke of York's calls itself. This is so stunningly inept that it had me pinching myself even when I wasn't nodding off.

Weekend Competition

No 2497 **Set by Spiro Keats**

It is high time we had a series of occasional comps devoted to individual living poets. Start with this. Rewrite any *Hamlet* soliloquy in the style of Philip Larkin. Max 16 lines, by 27 January.

Result of No 2494 **Set by May Day**

Competitors were asked to update songs with interrogatory first lines, like 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?' and 'Who is Sylvia?'.

Report **by Fat Jeff**

You may have noticed that each of the comps we set is given a number. You may also have noticed that the number of the next comp but two is a rather special number; that it has – how can I put it? – a certain resonance. Listen carefully, and you will hear the gentle clink of champagne glasses, the soft chomp of a highly acceptable canapé being devoured, the dulcet purr of one of Mr Keats's liveried footmen. Need I say more – except that this is a fine time to take it easy; that the invitation list is very far from being settled; and that every man is only as good as his last comp entry? In other words – get off your butts, and don't come this sort of stuff with us again in the next couple of weeks. A slightly grudging Partridge to Corleone, plus six of the best; the latter to the others too.

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Who, or why, or which, or what,
Is the Akond of Swat?
Well, it's not my period, that,
And I can't recite pat
Every blessed foreign place
Or its ruler. A face:
Now that's something I do not
Ever forget. A lot
Does depend on how you're taught,
Don't you think? I did sport
And too little with my brain.
Still, I mustn't complain.

V. F. CORLEONE

Where have all the flowers gone?
Windscale's withered every one.
Don't moan – you couldn't *pick* 'em, mate,
With fingers limply spatulate;
Nor *sniff* 'em either with a nose
That's like a bit of rotten hose.
As for *looking* – no need to mind
Now 'Plute' has made you colour-blind.
So that's where all the flowers have gone –
Windscale's screwed 'em every one
(And still the lobby voices deafen:
'Such Accidents Can Never Happen').

JONATHAN FERNSIDE

Do you remember an inn, Miranda?
Do you remember an inn?
Where the Jags and the Volvos filled the car park
And the Great Dane slurped his gin?
Where the talk was of dividends and the swapping of wives
And no-one was allowed to sing?
It was 'lefties and wogs – Britain's gone to the dogs'
Or 'that chap at Grunwick's for King'.
Do you remember an inn, Miranda,
With oak beams and ersatz horse brasses?
There was lunch for a ploughman they'd never let in
Except to wash up the glasses. JIM ANTHONY

Tony Miles

Chess

No 66 **November Problems**

The November problems were a mixed bunch. **Number 58 (k4r2/bp4p1/3p4/Pq1B4/3rP3/6P1/1QP2PP1/1R3RK1)** was simple enough once one found 1. . . . R-Q8!

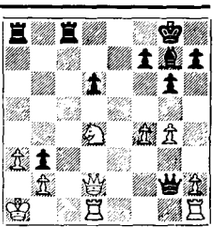
Problem 60 (2r5/1Q1R3p/1p4pk/7q/1P3P2/B3n3/7P/7K) caught a lot of people out. The game concluded 1. . . . R-B2; Resigns??, white overlooking the counter 2. P-N5! (threatening B-B8 mate) when black has no more than a draw: 2. . . . Q-Q8ch; 3. R x Q, R x Q or 2. . . . Q-K7!? (or Q-R6!?); 3. R x Pch! (not 3. B-B8ch? K-R4; 4. R x Pch, K-N5! winning) K x R! (not 3. . . . R x R; 4. B-B8ch) 4. Q x Rch with perpetual check. However, Mr J. D. Taylor ruined this one by noticing that 1. . . . R-KR1 serves just as well! After either 2. P-N5(?), Q-KB4! or 2. B-B1, Q-K7 or 2. B-N2, Q-K7 white has no more than a draw, and in some cases must work hard for that.

Problem 57 (r5k1/1pp2ppp/4r3/p3P2n/2Q5/PP1PP2q/1B2KPR1/6R1) was taken from a game Miles-Timman, Las Palmas '77, which concluded spectacularly 1. Q x P, R-QB3; 2. R x Pch, N x R; 3. R x Nch, K x R; 4. P-K6ch, K-R3; 5. Q-B4ch, K-R4; 6. Q x Pch, K-N5; 7. Q-N7ch, K-B4 with a draw. Most entrants found this line, but the other important variation 1. Q x P, R-QB3; 2. Q x NP was more troublesome. Timman and I thought that this was unplayable because of 2. . . . R-B7ch! and now (a) 3. K-Q1, R(1)-QB1; 4. P-K6, Q x P(K3); 5. R x Pch, N x R; 6. R x Nch, K-B1; 7. R x RP, Q-N5ch or (b) 3. K-K1, R-KB1! 4. B-Q4, P-KN3! with a dangerous attack (Inter alia 5. . . . N-B5 is a worry). Thus 2. . . . R(1)-QB1 is inferior because of 3. P-K6 meeting R-B7ch with K-K1! when there will be no check on N5. However, we were only analysing the most forcing continuations, and did not consider an interesting suggestion of Mr F. Kwiatkowski: 2. . . . R-B7ch; 3. K-Q1, R(1)-QB1; 4. R-N4 – a fine positional move, cutting off the BQ, indirectly defending the B, and threatening P-K6 and R-QB4. Even then, though, the position is most unclear. One possible line: 4. . . . Q-R7; 5. P-K6 (5. R(4)-N2, Q-R6 repeats), R-Q7ch! (not Q x P; 6. R x Pch, N x R; 7. P x Pch); 6. K x R, Q x Pch; 7. K-Q1, Q-B7ch; 8. K-K1, Q-N8ch; 9. K-B2, Q x Bch; 10. K-B3, Q-B3ch; 11. R-B4, Q x P – as I said, unclear.

The November prizewinners are Messrs Kwiatkowski, Taylor, Sahasrabudhe and Miss Keen (£12.50 each).

Problem 66

Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 25 January.



Solution to Problem 64(a)

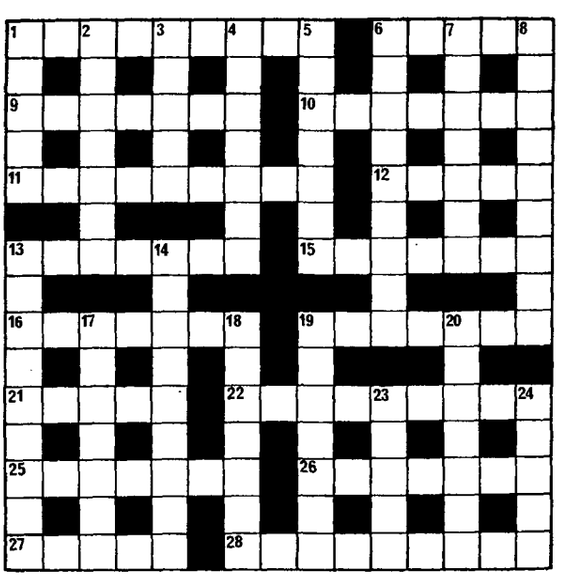
1. B-N8, R-QN7 (best. If 1. . . . R x P; 2. R-R5 mate and otherwise 2. B-N3); 2. B-N3!! (not 2. B-B4, P-N6) R x B (if 2. . . . R-KR7; 3. R-KB8! R-KB7; 4. R-QR8); 3. R-QR8! K x P; 4. K-N6 mate!

Solution to Problem 64(b)

1. R-Q2ch! K-B1 (1. . . . K-K2? 2. R-K2ch and N-B3); 2. N-R7ch, K-N1; 3. N-B6ch, K-B2; 4. N-B2!! K x N; 5. N-Q4ch, K-N3; 6. R-N2ch, K-R2 (. . . K-R4; 7. R-N4!); 7. N-B6ch, K-R1; 8. R-N6! R-QR5; 9. K-B2(1), R x P; 10. K-N1!! (the last finesse 10. K-N2? R-R5 and white is zugzwang!) R-R5; 11. K-N2, R-R4; 12. N x R, N x N; 13. R x Pch and 14. R x N wins.

Weekend Crossword 1249

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1249, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 24 Jan.



ACROSS

1. Heroine caught a lion and was then torn apart (9).
6. Fibre which makes a girl hold one back (5).
9. Evergreen in the bar but usually sober (7).
10. More pungent place in Africa? (7).
11. China, where police ran amok? (9).
12. Glamour which results in rings being given with speed (5).
13. It is potentially so cruel and may cause unemployment (7).
15. Sign of Islam encountered round the new Iran (7).
16. Vessel in which mothers are wrecked (7).
19. A mix up put right in the remote past (7).
21. Wood would be injured if pointless (5).
22. Skilfully in carrying out a bit of joinery (9).
25. Backs a vehicle with style, although the worse for drink (7).
26. Is love slow in coming? Then separate (7).
27. A journalist gets round the staff to make corrections (5).
28. It's rubbish, but fix up mother with a part (9).

DOWN

1. To swot a page is a painful experience (5).
2. A ban, but it makes nothing hold me up (7).
3. Two men in the news? (5).
4. If one is this, one leaves all except the beginning (7).
5. Mark married, although it means the opposite (7).
6. Drink when the new rounds are ordered (9).
7. Hero was one's lover (7).
8. God and chosen people get together slowly (9).
13. Round before a man about fifty is within reach (9).
14. A game in the nude contriving to be unique (9).
17. Pain in which one must not go near a chemist (7).
18. The vehicle went fast and is turning up (7).
19. Getting birdies in crazy golf win (7).
20. To a man I turn with heart and soul (7).
23. A jester gives up something for the bath (5).
24. Land in a single bed (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca

S	S	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	U	P			
H	A	P	P	Y	N	E	W	Y	E	A	R			
O	N	A	G	E	R	R	G	A	M	F	O			
U	T	T	E	R	I	R	E	S	A	L	E			
T	A	C	K	A	P	Y	R	E	S	A	M			
S	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	I	S			
S	H	C	A	R	D	I	A	C	A	L	M			
T	O	O	O	M	E	N	N	T	I	R	O			
R	I	C	H	E	N	N	S	O	L	I	D			
A	R	K	A	N	D	S	A	L	I	N	E			
W	E	T	H	R	E	E	K	I	N	G	S			
S	T	R	A	D	D	L	I	N	G	S	T			

Prizewinners to Salamanca

R. J. Hooper (Bath)
H. Salomon (Jerusalem)
J. P. Mernagh (Brough)
Pearce Curtin (Sydney)
David Singmaster (London SW11)

Solution to No. 1247

S	P	I	N	A	C	H	A	D	A	M	B	A	C	K	R	O	O	M
U	M	T	O	U	M	K	N	N	V	O				
C	U	P	B	O	A	R	D	S	O	R	I	E	N	T	A	L	I	S	T
C	O	M	S	T	U	N	O	V	P	T				
O	G	R	E	S	E	Y	E	B	R	I	G	H	T	E	R	A	T	O
U	T		W	R	S	S	A		R	E				
R	O	U	N	D	T	O	W	E	R	S	C	U	T	C	H	E	O	N	S
S	N	I	M		G	O	I	E	U					
	S	A	N	S	D	A	Y	C	A	R	O	L		O	N	A	S	S	I	S
S	T	S	N	A	I	L		N	D		N			
T	R	E	V	O	R	S	L	I	M	M	E	R	C	L	O	T	H	O
O		N	A	L	S	G	W	I	O	W				
W	A	S	S	A	I	L	T	A	B	L	E	M	A	N	N	E	R	S	
	H	N	B	O	Y		T	E	P	E				
S	W	E	E	T	M	E	A	T	S	B	L	A	C	K	S	H	E	E	P
O	P		S	H	A	A	H			D	E			
B	O	H	E	A		C	H	E	S	T	N	U	T	S		S	T	O	U	R
E	E		L	E		B	O	G		T	N		T	G					
R	U	R	I	T	A	N	I	A	N	S		H	A	R	L	E	Q	U	I	N
E	D		A	C	R	S	E		A	E		B	E						
D	E	S	E	R	V	E	S		C	A	R	D		P	A	R	C	E	L	S

Prizewinners to No. 1247

Nicholas G. Murray (Liverpool)
Barbara Simon (Edinburgh)
A. L. Barnes (Faringdon)
Alice Bartlett (London N5)
R. E. Bubb (Manchester)

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APPOINTMENTS

33 HOUSING OFFICER

The Haringey and Waltham Forest Area Team of Circle 33 Housing Trust needs a sixth member to work principally in housing management. The Team runs a large rehabilitation programme of around 150 units per year, and has responsibility for over 400 tenancies. The person appointed will be one of two Housing Officers covering the whole range of management activities in addition to wider involvement in the Team's work.

An Area Committee has recently been formed for Haringey and Waltham Forest, comprising elected representatives of the tenants, appointees of the two Boroughs and various local organisations, and a member of staff. This will supervise the work of the Trust in the Area.

At present the Team is based at Kings Cross but is seeking to move this year to an office in the Tottenham area.

A full driving licence is essential; a car loan scheme is available. The salary will be a minimum of £3,907 p.a. Applications are invited from people with Housing Management experience or broadly similar backgrounds. Please write to or telephone **Deirdre Burns at Circle 33 Housing Trust Ltd, 26 Pancras Road, London NW1, Tel. 01-278 3261.** The closing date for applications is Monday 30 January.

COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS

(re-advertisement)

Applications are invited for the post of

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

with responsibilities in Business and Social Studies.

In addition to their work in specified fields, Assistant Registrars are involved in the development of academic policy.

Candidates for the post should be well qualified academically and should have had appropriate teaching and/or academic administrative experience, preferably in the field of higher education.

The salary on appointment will be within the scale £5,925-£7,536 (merit bar £6,849) including London Weighting.

Further particulars of the post may be obtained from:

Secretary (BSS), Council for National Academic Awards, 344/354 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP.

to whom applications giving details of qualifications and experience and mentioning the names of two referees should be submitted by Tuesday, 31 January 1978.

ENGINEERS' & MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

Negotiating Officer/Organiser

The Engineers' and Managers' Association require the services of a Negotiating Officer/Organiser based in the first instance at their Edinburgh Office, to be responsible for their expanding membership of engineers, managers and professional staff outside the electricity supply industry. The duties are to negotiate terms and conditions of employment with many different employers, to recruit, organise and service new members, generally to represent and look after the interests of the Association's wider membership.

Negotiating experience, a good knowledge of industry, and the ability both to organise and communicate well are qualities we are seeking. Considerable travel as well as week-end and other out-of-hours work is involved.

Salary scale of £4,860 to £6,910 + £120 responsibility payment + £520 pay supplements. (This scale is shortly to be reviewed). The normal starting salary is at the minimum but this can be varied by agreement. Car allowance paid.

Further information can be obtained from: **The General Secretary, Engineers' and Managers' Association, Station House, Fox Lane North, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9HW.**

Closing date 7 February 1978.

VACANCIES

We require

MALE and FEMALE AGENTS

FULL and PART-TIME

If you are interested and would like to make up to £100 p.w. send for free details, enclosing s.a.e., to:

CALIBRE JEWELLERY SUPPLIES,
Calibre House, 162a Sefton Street,
SOUTHPORT, MERSEYSIDE.

FREEDOM + £800 P.M. Inexperienced men, women, then sky's the limit on oil/gas rig, on offshore, at sea, yachts, liners, exploration, salvaging. 'Employment Guide' 70p. 100,000 vacancies home, abroad, U.K. Europe, America, Scandinavia, Middle East, (26 countries), very high wages! Low, low taxes!! 'Working Holiday Free Travel Guide' 80p. Both £1.25. Buck (NS) 196 Green Street, Enfield, Middx.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT required, part-time. Approx. £150 per month. To aid in survey of West European Military Industry. Start 1 March. Further details: Dan Smith, Richardson Institute, 158 North Gower Street, NW1. Tel. 01-388 0882.

PUBLISHING SECRETARIES (Permanent or Temporary)—it's always the widest choice at Covent Garden Bureau, 53 Fleet Street, EC4. 353 7696.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation

is an international non-governmental organisation involved in family planning activities and services in more than 90 countries throughout the world. Financial assistance is received from governments, UN FPA and from voluntary contributions made by private citizens and foundations in many countries.

Conference Officer

is required for the International Liaison/Conference Department. The Conference Officer will be required to make arrangements for conferences; to draft agendas, and papers; to attend meetings of policy making bodies and organise recording of those meetings and the preparation of draft minutes.

Applicants should be educated to degree standard and have basic secretarial training, plus five years' practical experience, some of which should have been at a senior administrative level, and included responsibility for minute taking and arranging meetings. Knowledge of French and Spanish would be an advantage.

The salary for this post will be £6,384 p.a. together with valuable fringe benefits.

Please telephone for an application form and job description to:

Personnel Department,
International Planned Parenthood Federation
18-20 Lower Regent Street,
London SW1Y 4PW
TELEPHONE 01-839 2911

INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION

LABOUR WEEKLY

As part of its expansion programme, 'Labour Weekly', the newspaper of the **LABOUR PARTY**, is looking for: 1) a **Sub-editor**, 2) an **Industrial Reporter**, to cover all aspects of Trade Union news and labour relations, 3) a **General Reporter/Feature Writer.**

The salary scale is £4,055-£4,500, increasing by 4 annual increments, depending on appropriate experience, but successful applicants will all be considered for one graded post within the 'Labour Weekly' structure at an extra £220 per annum. All three posts are for journalists with not less than 3 years previous experience.

Application forms can be obtained from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Sq., SW1P 3JA. Tel. 01-834 9434.**

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 31 January 1978.

THE LABOUR PARTY

has a vacancy for a

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

(Salary range £3,215 to £4,515 p.a., depending on appropriate experience in a similar capacity)

Applicants should have an interest in, and knowledge of, economics and economic policy issues. An Honours Degree, though not essential would be a considerable advantage. Duties will include the preparation of papers on economic issues and will involve a good understanding of applied macro-economics.

Application forms and conditions of employment can be obtained from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA. Tel: 01-834 9434.**

Completed application forms should be returned not later than Monday, 30 January 1978.

CITY & HACKNEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL
210 Kingsland Road, London E2 8EB. Tel: 01-739 6308

CHC SECRETARY

Community Health Councils are the consumer's voice in the health service. City & Hackney CHC needs a new Secretary whose job is to build on our links with the local community, help to investigate health provision, represent the CHC's views to NHS management and provide advice and information to the public. Working knowledge of NHS, social services, voluntary organisations or community work is needed, as well as energy and initiative. Salary on the scale £4,882-£5,857 p.a. (inclusive).

Job description and application form from: Regional Personnel Officer, North East Thames Regional Health Authority, 40 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington, London W2 3QR. Telephone 01-262 8011. Ext. 143.
Ref: 1560/NS/13/1/78. **Closing date 31 January 1978.**

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AFRICA CENTRE

DIRECTOR - GENERAL

The Council of Management of the Africa Centre seeks a successor to the present Director-General. Suitable candidates will already know something of the work of the Centre — a unique educational, cultural and social centre founded by a group of Christians 14 years ago.

The job entails responsibility for every aspect of the Centre's operations, including liaison with interested Governments and other organisations, and the vital task of raising finance for the Centre.

Salary between £6,500 and about £7,500 p.a.

Letters should be addressed to the consultant advising the Council: M. J. Graham-Jones, The Faculties Partnership, 177 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1ER to reach him before 31 January.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Rural Department

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Two vacancies exist for Administrative Officers for graduates interested in rural social and economic issues.

The work includes providing news, information and advice to Rural Community Councils, servicing committees, the annual Rural Life conference and 'The Village' magazine.

The successful applicants should possess a degree in a relevant subject, and an interest in such topics as rural transport, housing, education, planning employment and conservation. A knowledge of voluntary organisations and of local government is very desirable.

Salary: £3,224 - £4,420 p.a. (under review), starting point subject to experience and qualifications. Superannuation scheme. 4 weeks annual leave. Application form and job description from the Administrator, NCSS, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel: 01-636 4066. Closing date: 27 January 1978.

GENERAL SECRETARY

required for

BRITISH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

to develop the work of the societies sending qualified volunteers overseas and to provide liaison between them. Third World experience essential.

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Particulars, including information on travel and removal allowances, study leave, housing and superannuation, may be obtained from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

Applications close on 28 February 1978.

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Scale £4,239-£4,545 plus supplements of £312 + £120 + 5%

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In both cases housing may be available. NJC Conditions of Service apply.

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Informal inquiries to Unit welcomed (Tel. Harlow 25174/34256). Application forms and a fuller statement from David Pugh, Harlow Council for Voluntary Service, Bentham House, Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex. Telephone: Harlow 32146/37647.

Closing date: 3 weeks after first appearance of this advertisement.

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Further details of the post and an application form can be obtained from the General Secretary, National Union of Teachers, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD to whom application should be sent not later than Saturday 28 January 1978.

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Vol. 95 No. 2443

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Theatres

ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded Booking Info 836 5332. 'The Comedy of Errors', Jonson's 'The Alchemist', Brecht's 'The Days of the Commune'. See the daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse at Donmar Theatre in Barrie Keeffe's 'Frozen Assets', James Robson's 'Factory Birds' (both unsuitable for children) and Edward Bond's 'The Bundle'. Also at Piccadilly Theatre in 'Wild Oats' and Savoy Theatre in 'Man and Superman'.

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Concert

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Andrzej Panufnik's latest composition has been commissioned by the *NORTHERN SINFONIA* with funds made available by The Arts Council of Great Britain and will receive its first three performances in a concert featuring also

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Mozart Piano concerto in C minor, K491

and works by *Bach* and *Dvorak*

all conducted by

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MIDDLESBROUGH TOWN HALL
Tues. 17 Jan. at 7.30
NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
Wed. 18 Jan. at 7.45
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Fri. 20 Jan. at 7.45

Poetry

ARTS COUNCIL POETRY LIBRARY

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Membership is free. Open to the Public. A collection of modern poetry covering the period from 1930 to the present.

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Charles Osborne: Literature Director
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Exhibition

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile, WC1. 405 9836. 18 & 19 C prints by Manet, Millet, Daumier etc. List on request, and lithographs by Moore, Whiteley, Lowry.

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Visconti's 'The Innocent' (X). Progs at 2.05, 4.25, 6.45, 9.05.

Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower Street, WC1E 6BT). Free Public Lectures, Spring Term 1978. Fri. 20 Jan. at 5.30, Commonwealth Fund Lecture in American History by Prof. Don E. Fehrenbacher, 'The Dred Scott Decision and its Consequences'. Thurs. 9 Feb. at 5.30, Inaugural Lecture by Prof. M. W. Swales, 'Irony and the Novel: Reflections on the German 'Bildungsroman'. Wed. 22 Feb. at 5.30, 'The Girl and the Soldier: Menander's newly-rediscovered 'Misoumenos' by Prof. E. G. Turner. Mons. and Thurs. 27 Feb., 2, 6, 9 Mar. at 5.30, Lord Northcliffe Lectures in Literature by Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'In Quest of Edmund Burke'. Complete list of public lectures from Publications Office, University College London, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. (Stamped envelope required.)

'COUNCILLORS AND THE MEDIA'. Julia Langdon of 'Labour Weekly' will speak at a lunch meeting 1 p.m. Sat. 28 Jan. at the Unicorn Hotel, Prince St, Bristol. Tickets £1.00 (including coffee & sandwiches) from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, SW1. Tel. 01-930 3077.

MICHEL LACLOTTE, Conservateur en chef du département des peintures du Musée du Louvre, will give a lecture on 'Le Département des Peintures du Louvre: Trente ans d'acquisitions' on Thursday 19 January at 6.15 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, SW7. Tel: 01-589 6211 ext. 38. Admission free.

THE IDEAL SOCIETY—what it is and how do we reach it? Rabbi Frank Hellner of the Progressive Jewish Movement will speak at Young Mapam, 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6 on Sun. 15 Jan. at 8 p.m. Adm. 50p.

'THE SPIRIT OF STALINGRAD'. Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), Fri. 20 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, Tufnell Park, NW5.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gowe St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.2(to 2. 17 Jan. 'Choice, Determinism anc Value in the Light of Biological Knowledge by Prof. J. Z. Young; 19 Jan. 'E. H. Thomp son's forty years of inventiveness' by Mi K. B. Atkinson. Admission free. Details o Public Lectures from Publications Office (send stamped envelope).

'NUCLEAR POWER and its Military Implications', talk by Dan Smith of CND. London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terr., W8. Sun. 15 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Adm. 30p.

ADLERIAN SOCIETY. 'Social Development Through Early School Years', Toni Towns, Early Childhood Educator. Tues. 17 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Mary Sumner Hall, 24 Tufton St, SW1. Visitors welcome 50p (Students 25p).

ASSEMBLY FOR DISARMAMENT and *Peace will take place in London* at the Camden Centre, Euston Road, London NW1 on 28/29 January. Speakers will include Sean MacBride, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ian Mikardo MP, Lucas Aerospace and Vickers Shop Stewards plus leading church and peace group speakers. Sponsored by numerous trade unions, peace groups, church bodies and sections of six political parties. All organisations are asked to appoint delegates as soon as possible (fee £4 covers all documentation) and individuals are also welcome. Details from ADP, 29 Great James Street, London WC1N 3EY or ring 01-242 0362.

'THERE ARE NO VOTES in Development' Speaker: John Tomlinson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Development. 6.30 p.m. Tues. 17 Jan. Admission 25p for non-members of RCS. Focus Group, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, WC2. 930 6733.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE—a meeting for all those interested in practising alternative to school. Methodist Church Hall, Lancaster Road, W11. Sat. 21 January at 10.30 a.m. Children welcome.

THE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES of the Labour School Governor. Meeting organised by the Socialist Education Association at Nufto Hall, Jockey Fields, WC1, Sun. 15 January, 2.30 p.m.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 14 Jan. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 17 Jan. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 18 Jan. 6.30 p.m. — *Tibetan Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism*, 2 study classes. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Simple talks for inquirers: Sun. 15 Jan. 8 p.m. 'What is Theosophy?'. S.a.e. free pamphlet, programme, book list. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

THE RECOGNITION OF MAITREYA, THE CHRIST AS WORLD TEACHER

Talks by Benjamin Creme based on Alice Bailey Teachings for The New Age of Aquarius.

FRIENDS' HOUSE, Euston Road, NW1. Thursday 19, Tuesday 24 & 31 January 7 p.m. Free

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GRAPHICS

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Wordsworth Heritage Appeal . . .

Books in Nooks?

Stubbs has been saved for the Nation, but the Wordsworth and Coleridge manuscripts are still not home at Grasmere. We have until 5 February to return them.

The V & A, the British Library and the Historical Buildings Council *are already firmly behind us. But with next month's deadline acutely* in mind, the Trustees of Dove Cottage propose (with the help of R. & J. Balding of Edinburgh), to put out a special catalogue of books and autograph material donated to the Appeal. So, in addition to money, we now urgently need anything at present gathering dust on your bookshelf.

Packages should be addressed to: **The Wordsworth Heritage Appeal, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria,** where they will be very gratefully received.

If you're short of string, we could probably arrange collection in many parts of Britain.

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